

SPARTA PB

Whitby, Michael

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SPARTA

Edited by MICHEAL WHITBY



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 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
New York London

In memoriam LGW

First Published in the U.S.A. and Canada in 2002 by
Routledge
29 West 35th Street
New York, NY 10001

This edition published 2012 by Routledge:

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
711 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
2 Park Square, Milton Park
Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

By arrangement with Edinburgh University Press, published in the series Edinburgh Readings on the Ancient World, edited by Michele George and Thomas Harrison.

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Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available from The Library of Congress

ISBN 0 415 93956 9 (hbk)
ISBN 0 415 93957 7 (pbk)

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Preface

This volume originated in a request in autumn 1998 from Tom Harrison to contribute to his and Michele George's new series of undergraduate readers, with the suggestion that Sparta might benefit from being treated by an observer who was slightly detached from the hurly-burly of the professional scholarly controversies. The challenge has been considerable, but also enjoyable. If the resulting volume fulfils its purpose, much credit is due to Tom himself for his perceptive editorial observations, to Emma Stafford for help and advice on Spartan matters, in particular on religious and artistic issues, to Nino Luraghi for discussing his current work and providing advance copies of unpublished material, and above all to Paul Cartledge. Paul has gone well beyond the obligations of his status as an advisory editor for the series to provide help to an amateur in Spartan affairs, a veritable *hypomeion*, even though he was well aware that some of my views are heretical. Thanks are also due to all the authors of the individual contributions who were most helpful in sanctioning the reprinting of their various pieces; Jean Ducat, in particular, vetted the draft translation of his chapter which had been prepared by Sam Coombes.

To Geoffrey de Ste Croix I owe a considerable debt not only as the contributor of three chapters to this volume but also as my undergraduate tutor in Greek history: without his stimulating teaching at that time, and support and encouragement over subsequent years, it is improbable that I would have had the ability or confidence to persevere in the academic world. There is much in this volume with which he would have disagreed, but during the summer of 1999 he quizzed me in considerable detail about my views and ideas to satisfy himself about the credentials of the project. He regarded Sparta as a pretty 'beastly' place, and I would not dissent. His death earlier this year is a great loss to all those such as myself who had benefited from his learning and friendship.

The problem of how to present Greek names is notorious. I have opted for pragmatic Latinising, while attempting to respect the more purist Hellenising of Paul Cartledge and others. The differences are not so great as to be too confusing.

This volume is dedicated to the memory of my father who upheld the interests of Edinburgh University Press during three decades of service to the University. His support over the years has been invaluable in my own career. Thanks beyond measure are also due to Lynne and the boys for their love and

tolerance during yet another bout of academic seclusion.

Michael Whitby

Note to the Reader

The articles and excerpts included in this book were originally published in a range of different journals and books. A degree of uniformity has been imposed (for example, in the abbreviations used), but many of the conventions of the original pieces have been preserved. This applies to spelling and punctuation (UK or US) and to different modes of referencing: chapters using the Harvard (i.e. name and date) system are followed by individual bibliographies; those using 'short titles' usually have footnotes and no bibliography.

The final bibliography contains the more important works referred to by the editor.

Editorial notes and translations of ancient texts are introduced either within square brackets [] or in daggered footnotes †. Some Greek terms, especially those in use in English, have been transliterated.

All abbreviations of ancient texts, modern collections, books and journals, used either in the chapters or in the editorial material, are listed and explained on the pages following.

Abbreviations

1 ABBREVIATIONS OF REFERENCES TO PRIMARY SOURCES

Ael[ian]	<i>V[aria] H[istoria]</i>
Alc[aeus]	
<i>Anth[ologia] Pal[atina]</i>	
Aristoph[anes]	<i>Lys[istrata], Thesm[ophoriazusae],</i> <i>Vesp[ae] = Wasps</i>
Arist[otle]	<i>Ath[enaion] Pol[iteia] = Constitution of</i> <i>the Athenians, Lac[edaimonion]</i> <i>Pol[iteia] = Constitution of the</i> <i>Spartans, Poet[ics], Pol[itics],</i> <i>Nic[omachaeon] Eth[ics], Rhet[oric]</i> <i>Deipnosophistae</i>
Ath[enaeus] or Athen[aeus]	
Dem[osthenes]	
Diod[orus]	
Eur[ipides]	<i>Andr[omache], Hec[uba], Her[aclidae],</i> <i>Hipp[olytus]</i>
<i>Hell[enica] Oxy[rhynchia]</i>	
Hdt.	Herodotus
Hes[iod]	<i>Op. = Works and Days</i>
Hesych[ius]	
Hippoc[rates]	
Hom[er]	<i>Il[iad], Od[yssey]</i>
Isoc[rates]	
Nic[olaus of] Dam[ascus]	
Paus[anias]	
Pind[ar]	<i>Ne[mean Odes], Pyth[ian Odes]</i>
Plat[o]	<i>Alc[ibiades] I, Rep[ublic]</i>
Plut[arch]	<i>Ages[ilaus], Alc[biades], Cim[on],</i> <i>Cleom[enes], De Superst[itione],</i> <i>Inst[itutiones] Lac[edaemoniorum],</i> <i>Lyc[urgus], Lys[ander], Mor[alia],</i> <i>Nic[ias], Pelop[idas], Per[icles],</i> <i>Phoc[ion], Sol[on]</i>
Polyaen[us]	

Polyb[ius]
 Ps[eudo]-Arist[otle]
 Ps[eudo]-Plato
 Soph[ocles]
 Theocr[itus]
 Thuc[ydides]
 Xen[ophon]

Ages[ilaus], Anab[asis], Cyr[opaedia]
 = *Education of Cyrus, Hell[enica],*
Lac[edaimonion] Pol[iteia] =
Constitution of the Spartans,
Mem[orabilia], Oec[onomicus],
Symp[osium]

2 ABBREVIATIONS OF JOURNALS AND MODERN EDITIONS

<i>ABSA</i>	<i>Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
<i>AD</i>	<i>Archaiologikon Deltion</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AJP</i> or <i>AJPh</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>ASAW</i>	<i>Abhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig</i>
<i>ATL</i>	<i>Athenian Tribute Lists</i> (eds B. D. Merritt, H. T. Wade-Gery and M. F. McGregor, 4 vols, 1939–53)
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>
<i>BSA</i>	<i>Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
<i>CAH</i>	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>
<i>CPh</i> , <i>CPhil</i> or <i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CR</i>	<i>Classical Review</i>
<i>CRAI</i>	<i>Comptes rendus de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i>
<i>DK</i> or <i>D-K</i>	H. Diels and W. Kranz, <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> (6th edn, Berlin, 1952)
<i>FGH</i> , <i>FGrH</i> or <i>FGrHist</i>	F. Jacoby, <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> (Berlin, 1923–)
<i>GHI</i>	M. N. Tod, <i>A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions</i> (Oxford, 1946)
<i>GR</i>	<i>Greece and Rome</i>

GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
HCT	A.W. Gomme, <i>A Historical Commentary on Thucydides</i> , 5 vols (Oxford, 1945-81)
<i>Hell. Oxy.</i>	<i>Hellenica Oxyrhynchia</i>
IG	<i>Inscriptiones graecae</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
JWI	<i>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</i>
LCM	<i>Liverpool Classical Monthly</i>
MDAI(A)	<i>Mitteilungen der Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts</i> (Athen. Abt.)
MH	<i>Museum Helveticum</i>
ML or M/L	R. Meiggs and D. M. Lewis, <i>A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century</i> (Oxford, 1969)
OCD	<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i>
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
PCPS	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
<i>P. Ox.</i>	<i>Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i>
QUCC	<i>Quaderni urbinati di cultura classica</i>
RD	<i>Revue historique de Droit français et étranger</i>
RE	<i>Pauly-Wissowa, Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
REA	<i>Revue des études anciennes</i>
REG	<i>Revue des études grecques</i>
RIDA	<i>Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité</i>
RM or RhM	<i>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</i>
SIG	<i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecorum</i>
SO	<i>Symbolae Osloensis</i>
TAPA or TAPhA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

Glossary

<i>agathoergoi</i>	the five eldest <i>hippeis</i> , used for special duties for one year
<i>agela</i>	(pl. <i>agelai</i>) pack of youths
<i>agogo</i>	standard name for Spartan educational system
<i>apella</i>	used, on basis of Great Rhetra, as name for Spartan Assembly
<i>apophora</i>	tax
<i>archon</i>	magistrate, usually annual, at Athens and elsewhere
Areopagus	Council at Athens composed of former archons
<i>damos</i> or <i>demos</i>	populace
<i>eiren</i>	Spartan young man, aged over 20, placed in charge of an <i>ile</i>
<i>ekklesia</i>	assembly
<i>enomotia</i>	(pl. <i>enomotiai</i>) military unit in which members of <i>syssition</i> served
Ephors	five magistrates, elected annually by the Spartan assembly
<i>erastes</i>	lover (male)
<i>eromenos</i>	beloved (male)
<i>eunomia</i>	good order
<i>gerontes</i>	men aged 60 or over elected to serve on Gerousia
Gerosia	Spartan council of twenty-eight men plus the two kings
harmost	governor
<i>hebontes</i>	(sing. <i>hebon</i>) Spartan young men between ages of 20 and 29
Heliaea	Athenian assembly meeting in a judicial capacity
helots	state-serfs
<i>hippagretai</i>	three adult Spartiates who selected the <i>hippeis</i>
<i>hippeis</i>	squad of 300, chosen from the <i>hebontes</i> ,

	who served as bodyguard for king in battle
<i>homoioi</i>	peers or equals, the term for Spartiate citizens
<i>hypomeiones</i>	inferiors
<i>ile</i>	pack of youths
<i>krypteia</i>	secret duties performed by select young Spartans
<i>lochos</i>	(pl. <i>lochoi</i>) one of the six divisions of the Spartan army down to the late fifth century
<i>mora</i>	(pl. <i>morai</i>) one of the six divisions of the Spartan army in the fourth century
<i>mothakes</i>	one of the inferior categories of Spartans
nauarch or <i>nauarchos</i>	(pl. <i>nauarchoi</i>) admiral
<i>neodamodeis</i>	helots recruited for military service
<i>nothoi</i>	illegitimates
obe	territorial division at Sparta, often equated with village
<i>paideia</i>	education
<i>paides</i>	Spartan boys between ages of 7 and 18
<i>paidika</i>	beloved
<i>paidiskoi</i>	Spartan young men aged 18 and 19
<i>paidonomos</i>	adult in charge of upbringing of males between ages of 7 and 30
<i>perioeci</i> or <i>perioikoi</i>	free inhabitants of Laconia who ‘dwelt around’ the Spartiates
<i>polemarchos</i> or polemarch	senior military officer
<i>polis</i>	(pl. <i>poleis</i>) city-state or citizen-state
<i>politeia</i>	(pl. <i>politeiai</i>) constitution
<i>probouleusis</i>	process of recommendation to Assembly made by Council after preliminary discussion
<i>proxenos</i>	representative of foreign state
<i>scytale</i>	stick used for decoding official messages while on campaign
<i>strategos</i>	general; at Athens ten were elected annually from c.500 BC
<i>synoecism</i>	amalgamation of separate communities to creat a <i>polis</i>
<i>syssition</i>	(pl. <i>syssitia</i>) dining group of which membership was a condition of full Spartiate status

tresantes

‘tremblers’, Spartans guilty of
cowardice in battle

trophimoi

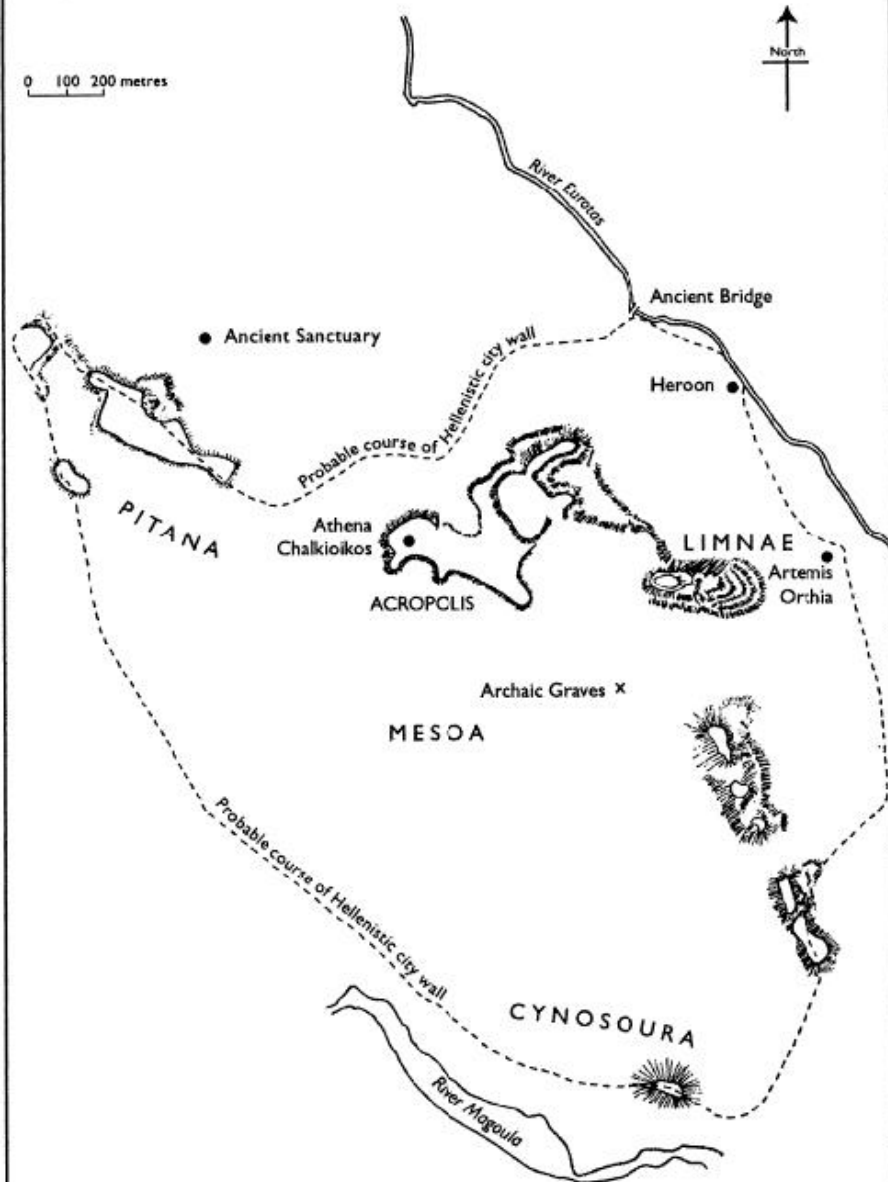
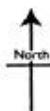
nurslings, pupils

xenelasia

expulsion of foreigners

Map 1: Sparta

0 100 200 metres



MAP 2: The Peloponnese and central Greece

This map illustrates the geographical layout of central Greece and the Peloponnese. Major regions labeled include Thessaly to the north, Boeotia to the northeast, and the Peloponnese peninsula to the south. The Peloponnese is divided into several regions: Elis, Pisatis, Achaia, Arcadia, Argolis, Thyreatis, Sicyonia, Cynouria, Parion, Taygetis, Laconia, and Messenia. Key cities and towns marked include Elis, Olympia, Aulon, Pylus, Sphacteria, Methone, Asine, Thalassae, Gytheion, Teuthrone, Cape Taenarum, Cythera, Boiae, Epidaurus, Limera, Zarax, Helos, Geronthrae, Amyclae, Sparta, Menalae, Misra, Pellana, Megalopolis, Tegea, Hysiae, Mantinea, Argos, Tiryns, Asine, Mycenae, Nemea, Corinth, Phlius, Lechaum, Isthmus, Megara, Plataea, Thebes, Delium, Tanagra, Acharnae, Elusis, Peiraeus, Aegina, and Oreus. The Gulf of Corinth, Saronic Gulf, Argolic Gulf, and Messenian Gulf are also labeled. A scale bar at the bottom indicates 0, 50, and 100 Kilometres.



MAP 3: The Aegean



Introduction

BACKGROUND, MOUNTAINS, SEA AND LAND

‘Mountains and sea’ is a traditional opening to discussions of Greek history and its geographical background,¹ and can provide an introduction to the distinctiveness of Sparta. The four villages of Pitana, Mesoa, Limnae and Cynosoura, which, together with nearby Amyclae, constituted the unwalled political centre for the *polis*² of the Lacedaemonians, known for convenience as Sparta, were located about 40 kilometres from the sea in the fertile valley of the Eurotas which formed the core of Laconia, the territory of Sparta. On the coast Gytheion offered a reasonable anchorage and facilities, but, though access was not difficult, a low ridge near Geronthrae, about half-way to the sea, perhaps created a mental barrier and turned the Spartans inland.³ Sparta could usually deploy a small squadron of ships, and in the exceptional circumstances at the end of the fifth century a navy under Spartan control even dominated the Greek world, but the sea and maritime communications were not central to Spartan existence as they were for Athens and the *poleis* of the Aegean. The Eurotas valley is flanked to east and west by the mighty ranges of Parnon and Taygetus, which occupy much of the surface area of Laconia, but Sparta was better provided with good agricultural land than most Greek *poleis*, especially after the late eighth century when it annexed the broader valley of the Pamisos to the west of Taygetus, the heartland of Messenia. Mountains determined the lines of movement within the expanded Spartan state, and how it communicated with the central and northern Peloponnese.⁴ They tended to isolate Sparta, protecting it from invasion from Arcadia or Argos, and so are more relevant to Spartan history than the sea, but, overall, agricultural land was the crucial geographical ingredient.⁵ Sparta had access to sufficient farming land to support a prosperous state down to the loss of Messenia in 369, and even thereafter, given proper organisation; issues of the exploitation and ownership of this land are of crucial importance to the understanding of the state.

For two centuries, roughly from the mid-sixth to the mid-fourth century BC, the *polis* of Sparta was accepted as one of the three strongest Greek states, and often as the most powerful. Its male citizen body of Spartiates,⁶ the *homoioi* or peers, although an increasingly small minority of the overall population, controlled the other inhabitants of its territory in such a way that all helped to sustain the strength of the whole. The *perioeci*, or the ‘dwellers-around’, will

have contributed to the economy in areas such as trade or metal-working which full Spartiates would not undertake,⁷ as well as controlling significant parts of the agricultural land; they were a factor in Spartan military power and, as citizen numbers declined in the fifth century, they came to be brigaded alongside the Spartiates themselves. The helots, a type of slave sometimes referred to as ‘state-serfs’ to distinguish them from the individually owned chattel slaves who were the norm in most Greek states,⁸ cultivated the land owned by Spartan men and women; their occasional revolts, especially those which involved the helotised population of conquered Messenia where memories of former independence remained strong, could seriously threaten Spartan security,⁹ but helots were also recruited for military service on several occasions and performed important functions in the imperial Sparta of the late fifth and early fourth centuries. There were in addition various obscure groups of subordinate citizens, inferiors (*hypomeiones*), tremblers (*tresantes*), illegitimates (*nothoi*) and *mothakes* (probably offspring of male Spartiates by helot women), categories which together incorporated those who failed to qualify for full membership on grounds of wealth, parentage, courage or other unknown factors.¹⁰ In its heyday Sparta operated a system which appeared capable of channelling Spartiate competition and the productive energies of all other social groups into the service of the state.¹¹ It has been plausibly suggested that Spartiates acted as patrons for ambitious *perioeci*, and such exploitation of client networks was probably a significant factor in the Spartiates’ ability to manage the potential of all the subordinate categories.¹²

Sparta was regarded by many as an inspiration on social and political matters: the reputation of the Spartan army struck terror into its opponents (e.g. Thuc. 4.34; Xen., *Hell* 4.2.18; 4.10–11),¹³ Sparta appeared to have devised a stable *politeia*¹⁴ which contrasted with the constitutional changes experienced by other Greek states, Spartan citizens were famous for their self-control and disciplined existence, Sparta epitomised tradition in contrast to the innovations associated with its main rival, Athens. While there is some truth in all these beliefs, they also raise major questions about our knowledge of the operation of Sparta’s political system,¹⁵ its social structure, and its interaction with the outside world. The key issue is evidence, what we really know about Sparta, and this involves consideration of what the Spartans permitted to be known about themselves and of how different images of Sparta were repeatedly created and reshaped, by Spartans and, more often, outsiders.

SOURCES

The difficulty of investigating Sparta was recognised in antiquity: Thucydides commented on the secrecy of Spartans (5.68.2.), admittedly in the specific context of military preparations and numbers, while Plutarch referred to the conflicting traditions about their lawgiver Lycurgus (*Lyc.* 1.1). Of the literary evidence relevant to the study of Sparta, only the poems of Tyrtaeus and the

choral odes of Alcman (both seventh-century) were composed by Spartans, and although this material is of considerable importance for the nature and development of Sparta in the Archaic age,¹⁶ it does not contribute much to our understanding of the functioning of the state at its peak. Outsiders picked up varying amounts of information. In the mid-fifth century Herodotus conversed with some Spartans, both in Laconia which he said he had visited (Pitana: 3.55), and probably also at the court of the exiled king Demaratus in Asia Minor, but the history of Sparta was not his theme and the stories which he relates, even about such a relatively recent figure as King Cleomenes, cannot be marshalled into a coherent narrative.¹⁷ Thucydides experienced Sparta during the Peloponnesian War (431–404); as an exile from Athens he might have had opportunities to visit the great enemy, but it appears that he found it difficult to acquire evidence with which to supplement his analysis of Spartan affairs as an intelligent but hypercritical outsider.¹⁸ His judgements were bound to be influenced by contemporary conditions, and so may not merit the universal application which they are often accorded.¹⁹

The best-informed foreigner was Xenophon, another exile from Athens after his mercenary service in Asia had brought him into the employ of Spartan generals; after the 390s he resided in the Peloponnese for two decades, living on an estate allocated to him by his patron King Agesilaus and perhaps entrusting his sons to the Spartan educational system. Xenophon knew much about Sparta, but had difficulty in reconciling his idealised vision of the state with the contemporary reality: one solution was to focus on Agesilaus as an ideal Spartan, but this meant ignoring some of the consequences of the king's actions; another was to provide a timeless description of the Spartan *politeia*²⁰ with only a brief allusion to contemporary departures from that ideal. A third, and much less direct, solution was to create a fictional account of the education of an ideal leader and the organisation of his country, the *Cyropaedia*; this, though set in the Persia of Cyrus the Great, appears to recall Sparta in certain ways.²¹

At Athens Xenophon had been a young associate of Socrates whose circle had probably often discussed the best form of *politeia*, with considerable admiration accorded to Sparta. At least one of its older members, Critias, composed two works on the Spartan *politeia* and then, after Athenian defeat in the Peloponnesian War, attempted to impose aspects of it on Athens when the presence of the Spartan Lysander in 404 had helped him to seize power and lead the regime of the Thirty Tyrants. Plato was another Socratic disciple to find inspiration in Sparta, especially the austere life and regimented society which might provide a model for a system designed to lead humanity towards 'the good'; as with the *Cyropaedia*, some information about Sparta, or perceptions of Sparta, can be filtered from the *Republic* and *Laws*.²² Aristotle knew Sparta in decline, and so was concerned with the failings as well as the operation of its political system. There is a useful discussion of Spartan problems in the *Politics* (2.6; 1269a29–1271b19), but the almost complete loss of

the Aristotelian *Constitution of the Spartans* (*Lacedaimonion Politeia*) has deprived us of a considerable body of evidence – though it would undoubtedly have thrown up its own collection of scholarly disputes. Of later authors the most important are Plutarch and Pausanias, who visited Sparta in *circa* 100 AD and 170 AD respectively when the city had been reinvented in a self-conscious attempt to recreate the society of its greatest age. Pausanias described the monuments he saw and recorded the stories connected with them; Plutarch relied much more on his own very extensive reading, though at times, as with his account of the ‘Lycurgan’ educational system, contemporary experience clearly intrudes.²³

In comparison with Athens we lack the types of evidence which bring alive the everyday existence of the city – the comedies, law court speeches, accounts of conversations or inscriptions which reveal how people might be represented interacting socially and politically. For Sparta the historians provide accounts of some public events, for example the debate in 431 on the declaration of war with Athens or the actions of King Pausanias in 403, but these narratives assume that the readers are either sufficiently familiar with Sparta to know how matters should have proceeded or not interested in detailed background information. It is therefore necessary to proceed cautiously from such narratives towards a reconstruction of the political system. By contrast the philosophical and political tracts present an ideal which will have a certain, though indirect, relationship with the system that existed either currently or at some unspecified moment in the past.²⁴ A further problem is that much of this evidence is fragmentary, so that the significance of phrases or sentences divorced from their literary context is bound to be disputed. It is not at all easy to unite this material with the historical narratives. Another factor is the paucity of archaeological information. When comparing Athens and Sparta, Thucydides observed that there was a marked contrast between the greatness of Spartan power and the insignificance of its public buildings (1.10.2). It is not therefore surprising that archaeology has not made a great contribution to the understanding of Classical Sparta: the most impressive remains are either Mycenaean and so predate the period of classical greatness, or Roman and illustrate the reconstituted city of the imperial period. It is possible that field surveys in Laconia or Messenia may produce information on population distribution,²⁵ or material relevant to the questions of how and where helots and *perioeci* lived, but to date the most informative finds from a century of exploration have been the assemblages of dedications from various major shrines which may provide insight into the development of Sparta in the Archaic period (especially the seventh and sixth centuries).²⁶ Sparta, therefore, remains a challenge.

HISTORICAL OUTLINE

The early history of Sparta, down to *circa* 500, could claim special status as a

topic for scholarly speculation. The Greeks knew a story that was clear in outline, if not in all its details. In Homeric times the Peloponnese was controlled by three main kings, Agamemnon at Mycenae, Menelaus at Sparta and Nestor at Pylos; their realms survived for two generations after the return from Troy, at which point they were overthrown by Dorian invaders from the north under the leadership of descendants of Heracles. Among these were the twin brothers Eurysthenes and Procles, who settled in Laconia, establishing the two royal houses of Agiads and Eurypontids. Thereafter the Dorian intruders gradually asserted control over Laconia, before turning their attention to Messenia. After a bitter struggle, which was followed within a couple of generations by a long revolt, Messenia was secured, though the crisis inspired both the poetry of Tyrtaeus, which attempted to inspire patriotic ardour in the Spartan youth, and some constitutional reform which came to be associated with the shadowy figure of Lycurgus. Sparta was transformed into a society which projected an image of stability and uniformity. This state was able to acquire territory to the north-east in a series of disputes with Argos, and then to extend its influence north into Arcadia in the sixth century, though here alliances rather than outright conquest were the mechanism.

Parts of this outline are probably true, others more or less plausible. In Laconia there was one important Mycenaean (fourteenth/thirteenth-century BC) site at the Menelaion, 2.5 kilometres southeast of Sparta itself, on a ridge overlooking the Eurotas valley; much later a small temple was built, where dedications were made to Helen and Menelaus. There was another major complex at Pellana, 30 kilometres to the north, whose importance is indicated by the cemetery of rock-cut tombs.²⁷ The Mycenaean buildings at the Menelaion were destroyed by fire *circa* 1200, and most other Mycenaean sites in Laconia also disappear: there is a shrinkage from fifty sites to fifteen in the early twelfth century, and then to fewer in the eleventh century; thereafter only Amyclae and Sparta provide definite evidence of continued occupation. During the eleventh century there is also a stylistic shift, regarded by experts as significant, in the pottery discovered at Amyclae.²⁸ Quite what this amounts to is another matter, since archaeological silence is not equivalent to complete absence of inhabitation, though it is clear that the elite which inhabited the Menelaion ridge was replaced in the long run by a different set of rulers who gradually set about consolidating their hold over the Eurotas valley.

One can guess at the main stages of this process, but no more. The nearby village of Amyclae, only 5 kilometres to the south, was attached to the four central villages of Sparta, perhaps as late as the mid-eighth century. The conquest was symbolised, or a process of integration furthered, by the incorporation of the local festival of the Hyacinthia as one of the major events of the Spartan religious calendar: an older god Hyacinthus was associated with Apollo. Other communities were reduced to differing degrees of subjection, perhaps depending on the extent to which they resisted Sparta's expanding

power, with the helots at the bottom of the heap, people whose name suggests a link with the Greek word for capture. Sparta would appear to have been led by a dynamic warrior elite in the eighth century:²⁹ in addition to consolidating control over Laconia it also launched the conquest of Messenia, and Sparta's only major colonial venture was dispatched to southern Italy, which resulted in the establishment of Taras (modern Taranto).³⁰ One factor in these successes may have been enthusiastic participation by the mass of the citizens, the *demos*, who were accorded certain constitutional rights in what was one of the very earliest of laws written in Greek, the document preserved for us in Plutarch's *Lycurgus* as the Great Rhetra.³¹ Another factor may have been the willing participation of the dependent populations of Laconia, who may have found in Sparta's growth opportunities for personal advancement analogous to those which Latins and Italians exploited during Rome's expansion. Of possible relevance is a difference in the level of collective, or centralised, control in the respective regions: it would appear that the *polis* of Sparta had managed to assert control over Laconia, but power in Messenia may still have been fragmented between different local centres, much as areas such as Arcadia, Achaea or Boeotia continued to resist unification into the Classical period.³²

Consolidation was the order for the seventh century, perhaps because of internal wranglings over the constitution, possibly because of a major defeat by Argos at Hysiae, which is traditionally dated to 669 on the basis of Pausanias (2.24.8),³³ certainly because of a major effort by the Messenians to cast out their new overlords: it is possible that the need to resist Spartan domination stimulated the construction of Messenian identity and promoted unification, much as England's attempts to annex Scotland did in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries AD. A combination of these challenges forced Sparta to exalt the cult of discipline at home, a process reflected in Tyrtaeus' poem *Eunomia*, 'Good Order',³⁴ and probably also in the acceptance by Spartan soldiers of the military developments in Greek infantry warfare which are for convenience known as the 'hoplite revolution'.³⁵ Sparta triumphed and in the sixth century there is fresh evidence for a renewed interest in territorial expansion: conflict with Argos in the middle of the century was successfully decided at the Battle of the Champions, when 300 representatives of each side fought to the death (Hdt. 1.82) – a reminder that the hoplite revolution did not change everything, even if this encounter still resulted in a formal battle. War against Tegea, however, resulted in Spartan captives being made to till Arcadian fields (Hdt. 1.66). These difficult contests may have occasioned further internal developments in Sparta, with greater attention paid to conformity and discipline even than before. After the conflict with Tegea Sparta seems to have used alliances rather than outright conquest to project its power in the central and northern Peloponnese, probably exploiting its reputation as the enemy of Argos to offer protection to the latter's neighbours. At the same time it showed an interest in the affairs of

central Greece, in Boeotia and at Athens, as well as in the wider world through alliance with Croesus of Lydia and involvement in the affairs of Samos (Hdt. 1.69; 3.46–7, 54–7; 5.64–5, 72–6; 6.108). Spartiates denied the chance of domination at home might look overseas for new lands to acquire: thus Dorieus, half-brother to King Cleomenes, led expeditions to North Africa and then towards Sicily, where the oracular bones of Laius had promised that the whole land of Eryx belonged to the children of Heracles (Hdt. 5.42–3).³⁶

By the late sixth century Sparta was recognised as the most powerful Greek state, and through its nexus of alliances, which now assumed the more orderly arrangement that scholars call the Peloponnesian League,³⁷ Sparta was the natural leader for the Greek world when Persian invasion threatened. First the eastern Greeks appealed unsuccessfully for help before their revolt in 499, then Athens secured help, even if belated, to oppose the Persian landing at Marathon in 490, and finally in 480–479 Spartan commanders were in command at all the major engagements of Xerxes' invasion; Leonidas' death at Thermopylae came to symbolise the professionalism of Spartan soldiers and their heroic devotion to the rule of law and the demands of their country. For the remainder of the fifth century Sparta was confronted by the rapid rise of Athens, a democratic, naval expansionist state which appeared to represent the antithesis of the Spartan ideal. When conflict came, Sparta was victorious, first at Tanagra in 458 or 457, and then in a series of naval engagements that eventually terminated the Peloponnesian War (431–404). But there had been many setbacks en route, including the destructive earthquake of 465 and the ensuing helot revolt, and the surrender of Spartiate troops on Sphacteria in 425 and the consequent Peace of Nicias in 421 in which Sparta effectively recognised that it could not uphold the interests of its allies. The navies which ground the Athenians down during the 'Ionian War' (412–404) could be financed only with Persian support, and that had to be purchased by conceding the Great King's right to control all the Greek cities of Asia Minor. Above all, the opportunities of foreign service repeatedly placed before Spartiates the temptations of wealth and personal power unfettered by the political and social controls within Sparta itself; many succumbed, starting with two of the commanders in the war against Xerxes, Pausanias the regent and King Leotychidas.³⁸

At the end of the fifth century Sparta stood supreme, but its powerful image was becoming increasingly stretched. Former Greek allies resented the attempt by Sparta to secure the main benefits from the defeat of Athens; Persia was alienated when Sparta tried to return to its more traditional stance of guarantor of Greek liberties against any other tyrannical power; more individual Greek communities experienced the harsh reality of Sparta through the behaviour of Spartan representatives. First the Greeks in Asia had to be sacrificed again to Persia under the terms of the King's Peace (387/6); then Spartan hegemony in Europe prompted the creation and rapid growth of a new Athenian-led alliance which had an explicitly anti-Spartan mission; finally the

Spartan army was crushed by the Thebans at Leuctra in 371, and within two years Epaminondas, the great Theban commander, had invaded the Peloponnese to liberate Messenia. Sparta was humbled and never again possessed the citizen manpower to live up to its historical reputation, though just as its real power waned so the force of its image waxed in the theoretical discussions of political and social organisations.

RECENT SCHOLARSHIP

The thrust of much of the best modern research into Sparta can be traced back to the publication in 1933 of the first part of Ollier's *Le mirage spartiate* (*The Spartan Mirage*): this examined the ways in which ideal images of Sparta were propagated, sometimes by Spartans but more importantly by non-Spartans, to represent what they wanted Sparta to be. These mirages influenced both how contemporary Sparta was described and how its historical achievements were remembered. After Ollier it should have been difficult to study Sparta without constantly being aware of the need to assess the distorting effects of the varying ancient perceptions. In a sense, then, it is ironic that Ollier has not been as influential on subsequent Francophone scholarship as on other traditions.³⁹ Some writers, notably Ducat on the helots, have indeed applied the principle of rigorously assessing evidence in its literary and historical contexts, but others have been less careful about combining evidence from different periods, especially in attempts to reconstruct aspects of the early social system. The work of French structuralists, especially Vidal-Naquet, is vulnerable in this respect: his anthropological approach to the study of Greek rituals generates fascinating and sometimes illuminating suggestions, but his analyses repeatedly raise the question of the compatibility of the evidence being assembled.⁴⁰ A similar charge can be levelled against the Swiss Calame's study of the choral poetry of Alcman, which undertakes the important project of placing this poetry in its ritual, social, political and military contexts: Calame champions the need for a synchronic approach and reconstructs the civic character of early rites and the ritual cycle on the basis of evidence from the Roman imperial period.⁴¹

German scholarship on Sparta over the past two generations has been profoundly affected by its appropriation by scholars propagating the thesis of Aryan supremacy, particularly in the context of the Nazi regime: recognition of common Indo-European linguistic origins was twisted to produce common racial origins between members of the linguistic family, or at least their elites; the origin of these elites came to be located in northern Europe, either Scandinavia or Germany, and a link was perceived between the Germans and the Dorian tribes who had invaded Greece from the north.⁴² These distortions built upon a much longer-standing German interest in the tribal structure of the Greek world and the different characteristics in particular of Dorians and Ionians, but they produced important historical precedents for a militaristic

state whose citizens were rigorously trained to generate an elite which would dominate its neighbours. Such deformation had serious consequences for scholarship. Although Rawson, writing towards the end of the 1960s, alludes to the continuing impact of German scholars on the study of Sparta, Christ's major historiographical survey identifies a period when Sparta was almost a taboo subject for Germans with the main stimulus to continued study being provided by Helmut Berve, the expert most closely associated with the National Socialist agenda.⁴³ Though it is true that Sparta naturally continued to feature in general works on Greek history and constitutional matters, and there were specific studies of Spartan social and economic institutions,⁴⁴ it has taken time for the momentum of German scholarship to be re-established. Only in the last dozen years has there been a sustained flow of specialist studies. The publication of Karl Christ's *Wege der Forschung* volume in 1986 might be given credit for helping to re-establish Sparta as a legitimate topic, and there is now reason to look to Germany for important new work. For example, Stefan Rebenich's edition, translation and commentary of Xenophon's *Lacedaimonion Politeia* is the first detailed scholarly study of this deceptive but important text.⁴⁵ Christ himself has contributed to German preeminence in the field of the history of historiography with a major survey of studies of Sparta from the mid-eighteenth century to 1986.⁴⁶

In this glance at German scholarship on Sparta Victor Ehrenberg, the professor of ancient history at Prague, must command a prominent place since his views on Sparta were formulated and first published in that language. In addition to ten Pauly-Wissowa articles in the decade 1928–37, which included the major entry on Sparta,⁴⁷ Ehrenberg's *Neugründer des Staates* of 1925 presented his theories on the construction of the unique Spartan social and political formation in the sixth century. Ehrenberg admired Sparta's ordered masculine military society, which depended on complete devotion to Law, the ideal which the exiled King Demaratus presented to the Persian King Xerxes (Hdt. 7.104). He presented Sparta as the 'first and greatest of all authoritarian and totalitarian states', where authority dominated the political and social world of all citizens.⁴⁸ Ironically, since Ehrenberg was a liberal Jew who had to flee the German annexation of Czechoslovakia, this view of Sparta was analagous to that exploited by the Nazis. After 1939 Ehrenberg found refuge in Britain and his important work thereafter was published in English.⁴⁹ One offshoot of Ehrenberg's time in Prague to deserve mention is the Czech scholar Pavel Oliva, some of whose articles appeared in German (as well as Czech, French and English), but whose major work, *Sparta and her Social Problems*, was published in English in 1971. This sets the various attempts at reform in Sparta during the Hellenistic period within a much longer chronological perspective of the creation and development of the distinctively Spartan system; particular attention is paid to the debates of modern scholarship, with a noticeable respect naturally accorded to the views of Ehrenberg.

For a British scholar to assert that the most interesting work on Sparta in the

past generation has been produced by scholars based in the United Kingdom might smack of petty national pride, but it is difficult to gainsay.⁵⁰ To single out individuals is invidious, but two men in particular can be credited with influencing this development, Moses Finley and Geoffrey de Ste Croix.⁵¹ Finley wrote only one essay specifically devoted to Sparta, originally published in French but soon translated into English and reprinted in the various collections of Finley's works.⁵² It may now be difficult to recapture the impact of this slim essay, which refused to engage in many of the sterile disputes of current academic Spartan studies and instead attempted to lay down a general framework within which Sparta might profitably be studied. Its success is revealed by the extent to which the 'Finley agenda', which might be described as the study of the underlying social structures of Sparta and of how these effected the working of the state, has permeated scholarly discussion of Sparta. On the other hand, partly because Finley's trenchant observations are now so familiar, more attention is likely to be drawn to important questions of interpretation which his survey often begged.⁵³ Specific evidence does matter, and few can afford to operate as magisterially as Finley; consequently, with some regret, I have chosen not to reprint his essay. By contrast de Ste Croix's 'big green book', *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, contains a mass of detailed discussion of different aspects of Sparta, primarily in relation to its international dealings but also on a number of important internal matters, since the nature of Spartan institutions and developments in Spartan society had a profound effect on the state's willingness and ability to act outside its borders. De Ste Croix's conclusions do not command universal agreement, but his approach forces dissenters to engage with the primary source material.

Finley and de Ste Croix have also been of great influence as teachers at Cambridge and Oxford respectively, and to an extent their individual approaches can be seen to typify the differences between the study of ancient history at these two universities; between them, however, they can take credit for the training of the two current authorities on Sparta, Paul Cartledge and Stephen Hodkinson. Cartledge has throughout his work acknowledged the twin influences of Finley and de Ste Croix,⁵⁴ and his numerous articles can be viewed as a project to combine the methods of de Ste Croix with the 'Finley agenda': thus central issues such as Spartan warfare, women, homosexuality, slavery and literacy are approached through a careful review of the evidence. Here Cartledge's distinctive contribution is his determination to locate discussion of ancient Sparta within contemporary historical debates and thereby remind more narrow-minded professionals of the obligation to show the relevance of their discipline to other academic discussions. His three major books on Sparta embrace the entire history of the classical *polis*. The first, *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History 1300–362 BC*, is the best example of a historical-geographical approach to the history of a Greek state.⁵⁵ This takes Sparta from its misty beginnings through to its triumph in the Persian Wars of the early fifth century, a period for which he combines the available

archaeological material with the stories preserved in later historians and the fragments of contemporary literary evidence; the better-documented fifth and fourth centuries are covered more briefly. The second, *Agessilaos and the Crisis of Sparta*, focuses on the king whose life and achievements reflect the best and worst aspects of the Spartan system, the most powerful man in the Greek world for much of his reign (397–60) but who stood on feet, or probably legs, of clay. The importance of Agesilaus was signalled in *Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, and Cartledge underpins de Ste Croix's assessment with a massive discussion of Spartan society and institutions as well as engaging in more general debates about the historical importance of individuals. The third, *Hellenistic and Roman Sparta* (jointly with A. Spawforth, who was responsible for the Roman section), is a less ambitious undertaking than either of its predecessors. Cartledge narrates the various Spartan attempts to overcome the consequences of their defeat at Leuctra in 371 and to adjust to life as a second-division state in a world dominated by Macedonian monarchs. Cartledge is undoubtedly the scholar most seriously underrepresented in this volume in terms of contemporary importance, the main reason being that his writings are surprisingly difficult to excerpt.⁵⁶ I attempt to redress this by noting Cartledge's key contributions at relevant points.

Hodkinson, though repeatedly acknowledging the importance of Finley's guidance, has also been more prepared than Cartledge to challenge the former's opinions, and his attention to evidence brings him nearer to de Ste Croix's approach. Hodkinson's practice is to assemble the ancient evidence, however poor it may be, and then to subject the literary material to a rigorous 'archaeological' review in order to establish its stratigraphy. This method is vital since the evidence is invariably limited and Sparta, despite its reputation for stability and continuity, underwent numerous profound political and social changes, with the result that evidence in late sources cannot be assumed to reveal conditions in earlier generations or centuries. The benefits of this approach are revealed most clearly in his solution for one of the most vexed Spartan questions, that of property ownership.⁵⁷

Spartan history has for long been regarded as a contentious field,⁵⁸ and the consequence of modern studies has undoubtedly been to increase the complexity of the arguments on individual issues. A danger is that the wood is being lost for the trees, and it is worth reminding oneself of the lucidity of the last general history of Sparta in English, George Forrest's *A History of Sparta, 950–192 BC*: though short, a mere 140 pages of text with no annotation, this presents a coherent and enjoyable picture of the rise and fall of Sparta, with the occasional flash of Forrest's intellectual brilliance, as in the excursus on the Lycurgan reforms.⁵⁹ It would be harder now to produce such a *tour de force*, and that is a price for the greater precision of our understanding. Another major work, which has already been mentioned in other contexts, is Elizabeth Rawson's survey of the influence of ideas about Sparta from the ancient world through to the mid-twentieth century; others have dealt at greater length with

Sparta's influence in antiquity,⁶⁰ but Rawson's grand sweep illuminates how its reputation has exerted a continuing fascination over the centuries and reveals why some appreciation of Sparta is necessary in order to understand the development of European political and social thought.

Sparta's continuing challenge to our understanding is reflected in the regular succession of scholarly studies and academic conferences devoted to it. In this connection the stimulating enterprise of Anton Powell deserves recognition since he, twice in collaboration with Stephen Hodkinson, has now edited and published three collections of Spartan papers, while the meetings from which many of these papers emanated have prompted further thought. These initiatives have also demonstrated that it is possible for those who are not Sparta specialists to contribute to on-going debates. All students of ancient history can respond to the attractions of investigating Sparta as an important, complex and challenging society, but one for which the literary evidence is sufficiently limited for students to read most of it – Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Pausanias.⁶¹ These written sources can then be combined with surveys of archaeological material, whose study is currently one of the most exciting aspects of Spartan studies. Students will then be able to form their own assessments of rival scholarly theories and continue the respectable intellectual tradition of inventing their own Spartas.

¹ E.g. Osborne, *Greece*, 53, or quarter of a century of first-year undergraduate lectures at St Andrews by Geoffrey Rickman.

² *Polis* can be translated as 'city-state' or 'citizen-state', though neither fully captures the sense of the Greek, since a *polis* comprised a state's rural territory as well as its political centre and the institutions of an urban nucleus were a defining characteristic for most *poleis*.

³ Forrest, *Sparta*, 13.

⁴ J. Christien, 'Les liaisons entre Sparte et son territoire malgré l'encadrement montagneux', in J.-F. Berger (ed.), *Montagnes, fleuves, forêts dans l'histoire: Barrières ou lignes de convergence*, St Katharinen: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, 1989, 18–44.

⁵ Sparta was probably not the only Peloponnesian state for which 'land and mountains' were the key determinants, but Greek history is rarely viewed from the perspectives of states such as Elis or Tegea, or even Argos (for one interesting, but limited, attempt with regard to the north-east corner of the Peloponnese, see K. Adshead, *Politics of the Archaic Peloponnese: The Transition from Archaic to Classical Politics*, Aldershot: Areburg Publishing, 1986).

⁶ 'Spartiate' is the technical term for citizens of Sparta, rather than the more obvious 'Spartan'.

⁷ Thus Finley, 'Sparta', 167; see further Shipley, 'PERIOIKOS', 211–26, of which part is reprinted below (Ch. 9).

⁸ E.g. Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia*, 165, and see Oliva, *Sparta*, 38–42, for discussion of various terms; their precise status had puzzled ancient commentators. See further Part IV (Chs 9–11) below.

⁹ See de Ste Croix, *Origins*, 89–98, of which part is reprinted below, and the references to other discussions in the accompanying commentary.

¹⁰ For discussion of these groups, see Hodkinson, 'Dependents'; also Ogden, *Bastardy*, Ch. 7. For the *mothakes*, at least, there were arrangements for elevation to full Spartiate status.

¹¹ See Ch. 14, esp. p. 246.

¹² Hodkinson, 'Dependents'; the possibility had already been hinted at by de Ste Croix, *Origins*, 354 (Appendix XXVII).

¹³ The significance of Sparta's ability to transform a record of moderate military success into a reputation in the Greek world for invincibility needs to be stressed.

¹⁴ *Politeia* is another difficult word to translate: 'constitution' is the standard rendition, but a *politeia* incorporated religious and social aspects in addition to the constitution.

¹⁵ See, for example, the debate between Andrewes and de Ste Croix in Part II.

- 16 See, for example, Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia*, Ch. 8.
- 17 Oswyn Murray plausibly suggested that Herodotus constructed his narrative from a variety of local oral traditions, whose divergences he did not attempt to reconcile: 'Herodotus and Oral History', in H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt (eds), *Achaemenid History II: The Greek Sources*, Leiden: Brill, 1987, 93–115, esp. at 101ff.
- 18 P. A. Brunt, 'Thucydides and Alcibiades', *REG* 65, 1952, 58–96, at 72–3 suggested that Alcibiades provided information on events at Sparta; S. Hornblower, *Thucydides*, London: Duckworth, 1987, 79, suggested that Thucydides could have met Brasidas in Thrace.
- 19 Note Starr, 'Credibility', 2.62, for the tendency to excessive veneration; scholars will often recognise that some judgements are suspect, but fail to exercise the necessary caution throughout: e.g. Powell, *Athens*, 231 in contrast to 221–2 (reprinted in Ch. 5 below at pp. 102 and 90).
- 20 For discussion of the *Constitution of the Spartans (Lacedaimonion Politeia)* see Rebenich, *Xenophon*.
- 21 For a different assessment, see C. J. Tuplin, 'Xenophon, Sparta and the *Cyropaedia*', in Powell and Hodkinson, *Shadow*, 127–81.
- 22 Discussion of *Laws* in A. Powell, 'Plato and Sparta: Modes of Rule and Non-rational Persuasion in the *Laws*', in Powell and Hodkinson, *Shadow*, 273–321.
- 23 See Kennell, *Gymnasium*.
- 24 The issue of what evidence to prefer underpins the debate between Andrewes and de Ste Croix in Part II.
- 25 The second volume of the Laconia field survey has already appeared: Cavanagh et al., *Continuity*.
- 26 This may be too defeatist: discovery of fragments of dedicated models of temples has permitted discussion of temple architecture in Laconia in the Archaic age: see R. W. V. Catling, 'A Fragment of an Archaic Temple Model from Artemis Orthia, Sparta', *ABSA* 89, 1994, 269–75, and R. W. V. Catling, 'Archaic Lakonian Architecture: The Evidence of a Temple Model', *ABSA* 90, 1995, 317–24.
- 27 The location of Mycenaean Sparta is disputed. Hector Catling is the great champion of the Menelaion site: see H. W. Catling, 'The Work of the British School at Athens at Sparta and in Laconia', in Cavanagh and Walker, *Sparta*, 26, with detailed bibliography at 161–2. For the claims of Pellana, see T. G. Spyropoulos, 'Pellana, the Administrative Centre of Prehistoric Laconia', in Cavanagh and Walker, *Sparta*, 28–38.
- 28 Summary in Cartledge, 'Lakedaimon'; more detail in his *Sparta and Lakonia*, Chs 6–7. For recent discussion of the pottery see Cavanagh et al., *Continuity*.
- 29 Cf. van Wees, 'Eunomia', 2–3, for the notion of a highly acquisitive and competitive Sparta.
- 30 The circumstances of the colonial venture are obscured by the stories (Strabo 6.3) concerning the 'maiden-born' Partheniae for whom the expedition was supposedly organised. The standard view (e.g. Forrest, *Sparta*, 61–2) is that Spartan authorities acted to export a group of men disgruntled by some aspect of the conquest of Messenia, though there is nothing to rule out Cartledge's proposal (*Sparta and Lakonia*, 123–4) that the adventure was initiated from below and only later acquired official recognition, after the successful establishment of the new settlement. In either case the story presupposes that both fierce internal competition and an interest in external expansion are normal at Sparta. For recent discussion, see M. Nafissi, 'From Sparta to Taras: *nomima*, *ktiseis* and Relationships between Colony and Mother City', in Hodkinson and Powell, *Sparta*, 245–72, at 254ff.
- 31 See further, p. 46.
- 32 I owe this suggestion to discussions with Nino Luraghi.
- 33 Pausanias indeed is the only source to mention the battle, and his Olympiad date has to be emended. For a radical proposal to redate the battle to the early fifth century, see P. K. Shaw, 'Olympiad Chronology and "Early" Spartan History', in Hodkinson and Powell, *Sparta*, 273–309.
- 34 van Wees, 'Eunomia', argues that Tyrtaeus' poem, with its respect for royal authority, antedated the Great Rhetra, which allocates significant attention to the assembly. But the differing emphases could be explained by the very different contexts of the two texts, one an appeal for order during a military crisis when royal leadership was likely to be crucial, the other a record of constitutional change; alternatively, Tyrtaeus may have been reacting against the changed balance of power introduced by the Rhetra.
- 35 See Cartledge, 'Hoplites'; for a more general survey, with recent bibliography, see P. Cartledge, 'La nascita degli opliti e l'organizzazione militare', in S. Settis (ed.), *I Greci: Storia Cultura Arte Società*, vol. II. 1, Turin: G. Einaudi, 1996, 681–714, esp. 693–706.
- 36 Cf. Starr, 'Credibility', 263–4, for Spartan activity.
- 37 See the contributions of Cartledge and de Ste Croix in Part V.
- 38 And note the temptation of King Cleomenes by Aristagoras of Miletus in 499, from which he was

just rescued by his young daughter Gorgo (Hdt. 5.51)

³⁹ E.g. Janni, *Cultura*, 13.

⁴⁰ See in particular his discussion of the *krypteia* and *agoge* in 'Recipes for Greek Adolescence', in *Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World* (trans. A. Szegedy-Maszak), Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986, 147–50.

⁴¹ Calame, *Choruses*, 9–10; 158–9. Calame asserts that diachronic analysis does back up his synchronic approach (e.g. 168), but this argument is circular.

⁴² For the development of these ideas from the middle of the nineteenth century through to the Second World War, see Rawson, *Tradition*, 333–43.

⁴³ Rawson, *Tradition*, 333 (no indication as to which scholars); K. Christ, 'Spartaforschung und Spartabild', in his *Sparta* 59, 62–3.

⁴⁴ For example, Lotze, *Μεταξὺ*.

⁴⁵ Rebenich, *Xenophon*; note, too, L. Thommen, *Lakedaimonion Politeia: Die Entstehung der spartanischen Verfassung*, *Historia Einzelschriften* 103, 1996. This is not to belittle the merits of the English annotated translations by J. M. Moore, *Aristotle and Xenophon on Democracy and Oligarchy*, or R. J. A. Talbert, *Plutarch on Sparta*, but neither sets out to be as thorough as Rebenich.

⁴⁶ Christ, 'Spartaforschung'; Rawson, *Tradition*, is a much broader-ranging volume which does not go into such detail about academic studies or investigate developments after the Second World War.

⁴⁷ *RE* III.2.A (1929), 1373–1453.

⁴⁸ V. Ehrenberg, 'A Totalitarian State', in his *Aspects of the Ancient World*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1946, 94–104 (quotation from 104); this essay originated as a German radio broadcast from Prague in 1934.

⁴⁹ For example the collection, *Aspects of the Ancient World*.

⁵⁰ One indication would be the contents of Christ's *Wege der Forschung* volume, where Forrest, Andrewes, Finley and Cartledge are among the nine contemporary contributions; it is reassuring that a similar conclusion is reached by S. Hodkinson, 'Introduction', in Hodkinson and Powell, *Sparta*, ix–x.

⁵¹ This is not to deny the relevance of other factors, such as the presence in Britain of Ehrenberg, or the careful studies of Andrewes.

⁵² Finley, 'Sparta'; originally published in J. P. Vernant (ed.), *Problèmes de la guerre en Grèce ancienne*, Paris: Mouton, 1968.

⁵³ Hodkinson, 'Warfare', 148.

⁵⁴ On occasions perhaps to excess: see F. Kiechle's review of *Sparta and Lakonia* in *Classical Review* 31, 1981, 79–81, at 81 – the deference shown to Finley led Kiechle to assume that Cartledge was one of Finley's pupils, and he assailed him as a surrogate target.

⁵⁵ Though the discussion of the material evidence should now be read in conjunction with the volumes of the Laconia Survey: Cavanagh et al., *Continuity*.

⁵⁶ Cartledge's own collection of his key publications on Sparta (*Spartan Reflections*) is, therefore, very much to be welcomed.

⁵⁷ Hodkinson, 'Land', 'Inheritance', in Powell, *Techniques*, 79–121 (a summary of his views is reprinted below as Ch. 4).

⁵⁸ Ehrenberg, *Solon to Socrates*, 389: 'The history of early Sparta has been a kind of battlefield for modern historians.'

⁵⁹ Forrest, *Sparta*, 40–60.

⁶⁰ In particular, Tigerstedt, *Legend*, which is a massive, if somewhat undigested, compilation of ancient opinions about Sparta.

⁶¹ For suggestions on translations, see the Guide to Further Reading.

PART I

Early Sparta

Introduction

Victor Ehrenberg, in later life, described the early history of Sparta as a kind of battleground for modern historians, which called for the ‘intellectual gymnastics’ in which he had once indulged.¹ Finley chose to sidestep these disputes to focus his analysis on the Spartan social system in the Classical period (fifth-fourth centuries).² To an extent Starr anticipated this approach, but his article also constitutes a good introduction to early Sparta since, while eschewing detailed answers to insoluble questions, it directs readers to the assessment of the ancient evidence. Starr lays down a golden rule for the study of Sparta: all literary evidence needs to be weighed in terms of the author’s interests and prejudices, the date of composition and, in the case of later authors who appear to preserve extracts from earlier lost sources, the pedigree of the information. Thus the article, though written well over a generation ago, sets out clearly the questions which need to be asked of any reconstruction of Spartan history or society. It also touches on many of the approaches which have proved fruitful in subsequent studies.

One issue to consider is whether Starr was sufficiently sceptical, whether he overestimated the knowledge which authors in the fifth century possessed about early Sparta, and whether in particular Herodotus was as free from the distorting effects of Spartan image-building as he supposed.³ It is right that Starr’s cautions should be applied to his own analysis as well as to any attempt at detailed reconstruction of early Spartan history. Between the mid-eighth and the late sixth centuries Sparta, like other Greek *poleis* of which we have knowledge, experienced a number of developments that contributed to the construction of its distinctive nature in the Classical period. Locally there was territorial expansion at the expense of the other inhabitants of Laconia and then of neighbours in Messenia; there was also some interest in external adventures. Politically there was the adoption of a constitution, the document preserved in Plutarch’s *Lycurgus* (6) as the Great Rhetra, which attempted to define the respective roles of kings, Council of Elders (Gerousia) and citizen Assembly, and the emergence of an annual board of magistrates, the Ephors. Militarily Sparta embraced the changes in weapons and tactics known as the ‘hoplite revolution’, which made service in the hoplite phalanx the criterion for full citizenship.⁴ Economically the state’s resources in land, including the spoils of conquest, were distributed to the extent that citizens were enabled, initially, to fulfil their military obligations. Socially the lives of citizens came to be regulated more closely, with attention paid to the upbringing, *paideia*, of

the future soldiers and to their collective adult existence as members of small dining groups, *syssitia*. Materially there were changes in the types of artefact dedicated in Spartan shrines, as well as in the Laconian bronze work and pottery which has been discovered at various overseas sites such as Taras and Samos. Religiously there were new festivals, or new importance was attached to existing festivals.

Many of these developments will have interlocked, though the order of priority, precise interactions of cause and effect, as well as questions of chronology are the subject of speculation rather than certainty. Some important developments may have been planned or initiated by a specific individual, the person whom the Spartans came to revere under the name of Lycurgus, but, if so, his importance as the inventor of the Spartan system has effectively obscured whatever he may have achieved in reality. Herodotus noted that Spartans believed that Apollo was uncertain whether Lycurgus had been man or god (1.65.2–3), while Plutarch observed that everything about Lycurgus is disputed (*Lyc.* 1). There is no prospect of resolving the complexities and contradictions of the initiatives attributed to him; there is little point, either, in substituting an alternative political inventor, for whom the favourite candidate is Chilon, the famous Ephor of the mid-sixth century.⁵ There will have been certain key phases of change at Sparta, and it is essential to remember that in some respects Sparta may have been relatively advanced in comparison with other Greek states, for example in the acquisition of a written constitution; in others, though, it may have been backward, perhaps in its adoption of hoplite tactics if its defeat by the Argives at Hysiae is to be ascribed to the different rate at which these two states had reacted to military developments.⁶ The desire to build a narrative of early Spartan history must always be tempered by the caution advocated by Starr and more recently Hodkinson, and the hypothetical nature of any narrative must be borne in mind.

It is unlikely, though not impossible, that new literary evidence will be discovered which permits a more certain grasp of the development of early Sparta, but archaeological investigation in Laconia, much of it under the aegis of the British School at Athens, may help to change the picture, either through new discoveries or through the more sophisticated interpretation of existing finds. A topic currently under discussion is the material which has been thought to reflect the transition of Sparta from a relatively typical Greek state with an indigenous artistic tradition to a much more austere existence. The evidence on which the discussion is based provides a good illustration of the problems of interpreting and utilising archaeological evidence to reconstruct historical developments. In the early part of the twentieth century British excavations in Laconia, especially at the important shrine of Artemis Orthia, turned up a mass of lead figurines that illustrated the wealth as well as the artistic tastes of the Spartan clientele which had dedicated them. Discoveries of black-figure pottery permitted the identification as Laconian of groups of pots

discovered on Samos and Sicily, thereby apparently offering further insight into Spartan tastes. At some point the level of metal dedications declined and the distinctive pottery disappeared, developments which could be interpreted as part of a move to the stricter life-style which is a prominent part of the classic image of Sparta (e.g. Plut., *Lyc.* 8–10). There were uncertainties about the chronology of these changes, and the fact that dedications and pottery production continued at least until late in the sixth century posed problems for the notion of Lycurgus as the inventor of austerity, but these were minor inconveniences which could be circumvented by playing up the notion of a sixth-century ‘revolution’ in Sparta and so creating something for Chilon the Ephor to have accomplished; more subtle interpretations recognised that the artistic decline was gradual and linked this with the development of a more narrowly focused military society at Sparta.⁷

So far so good, but the problems were much more deeply seated, as Stephen Hodkinson has forcibly restated. One factor which makes the archaeological record less decisive evidence for decline is the development of the Artemis Orthia site: remains from the early sixth century (and earlier) were protected, and hence available for discovery, because they had been sealed by a layer of sand spread over the area in the context of a major redevelopment; objects from later periods would have been more subject to flooding from the nearby river Eurotas or plundering in later generations. This problem of changing conditions was acknowledged by the original excavators, but, even though they could not quantify the level of losses from more recent levels (mid-sixth century onwards) they still concluded that Sparta had moved to a more austere life-style, largely because this was how Sparta was *known* to have developed; not all subsequent interpreters have highlighted the serious issue of the changing physical environment against which the archaeological record must be interpreted.

Although dedications at the Orthia sanctuary superficially bear out the thesis of artistic decline, a more comprehensive look at the pattern of Spartan dedications at four major shrines reveals, in spite of the considerable difficulties posed by poor publication of the material and imprecise dating of many of the remains, that Spartan expenditure on votives continued at a considerable level on the Acropolis and at Amyclae down to the mid-fifth century, and beyond.⁸ Another consideration is that full Spartan citizens are unlikely to have had any involvement in the production or dissemination of the material objects whose distribution is used as evidence for changes affecting Spartiates themselves. A third factor is that the distinctive black-figure pottery was the product of only two identified workshops, most of whose output was exported to a varying range of destinations; this pottery may well not reflect Spartan tastes,⁹ and its disappearance need not have wider implications for social changes at Sparta. Non-figured black-glazed ware continued to be produced throughout the sixth century and into the fifth, and thereafter potters in Laconia, in common with many other areas of the Greek

world, began to imitate Attic red-figure ware.¹⁰

Interpretation of the archaeological record will continue to be debated, but for the non-professional venturing into this minefield it is essential to attempt to take account of all the complicating aspects which militate against adoption of easy solutions, for example the theory of growing austerity in the sixth century. Sparta may indeed have become more tightly regulated, since evidence for religious expenditure might not be relevant to the reconstruction of other aspects of Spartan society; at present, however, this must remain a hypothesis which may explain some aspects of the material record rather than an account which is corroborated by that record.

The distinction between what we can know and what we have to infer is central to Starr's discussion of Sparta's early history, and it is an injunction to be remembered by all students of Sparta at all times.

¹ *Solon to Socrates*, 389.

² Finley, 'Sparta'.

³ Starr, 263–4 (pp. 33–4 below); for discussion see Hodkinson, 'Development'.

⁴ Full discussion in Cartledge, 'Hoplites'.

⁵ Thus Nafissi, *Nascita*, Ch. 2.

⁶ Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia*, 126; note that this is speculation, although I find it plausible.

⁷ Chilon: G. Dickins, 'The Growth of Spartan Policy', *JHS* 32, 1912, 1–42, at 17. More gradual: Holladay, 'Austerity', 111–14; Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia*, 156.

⁸ Hodkinson, 'Development'.

⁹ Hodkinson, 'Production', 100. This undermines the basis for A. Powell's argument ('Painting') that scenes on the black-figure pots can be used to reconstruct Spartan tastes down to the early sixth century, with considerable attention to the delights of the symposium and little attention to athletics or military activity.

¹⁰ Fitzhardinge, *Spartans*, presents the material clearly, and there are some excellent photographs in Sekunda's booklet (*Spartans*).

1 *The Credibility of Early Spartan History*[†]

CHESTER G. STARR

Although the long course of Spartan history offers many significant turns and fascinating problems, scholars in recent years have devoted their greatest attention to its earlier centuries; by at least 600 BC. Spartan life and politics had undergone a major reorganization, out of which the classic pattern eventually emerged. As a result of current attention to this reorganization anyone who now seeks to reassess our views of early Laconia must feel a keen sympathy with those Messenian helots whom the poet Tyrtaeus described as “asses worn by their great burdens”; for the quantity of modern scholarship on archaic Sparta is extraordinarily large.¹ In the last generation more books have been written on early Sparta than on the contemporary stages of Athenian history, and virtually every twelve months a new article solidly and irrefutably assigns Lycurgus to a different date than that proved in last year’s study.

This intense interest would in itself form a worthy subject of investigation. Already by the late fifth century BC the Spartan polity and social structure were being idealized by some non-Spartans;² the reverence which men of Rousseau’s generation and of the French Revolution felt for Spartan stability and dedication to the public good is well-known;³ but the recent popularity of early Sparta springs, I think, from different roots. We who live today are not quite so certain of the dominance of the intellect and perhaps tend in consequence to react against the nineteenth-century idealization of Athens. Sparta, too, may afford more interesting ground in which to apply currently fashionable concepts of cultural anthropology or to explore the abnormal psychology of political units, the survival of the traditional and irrational, and that repression of the individual for the good of the community which appears in some states of the twentieth century.⁴ More generally it may be observed that Greek studies have shifted their focus in part from the classic to the archaic era, and within this earlier age the development of Sparta is a puzzle to challenge the best of thinkers.

We must, however, remember that not even the Greeks of the classic period knew the deeds of their archaic ancestors well. They masked their ignorance by learned reconstructions, the bases of which were often no more than patriotism, intellectual imagination, or romantic dream. Can the modern student be sure that, in his passion to know all he can about early Sparta, he is not accepting ancient fables?

Here lies the focus of our problem – the credibility of the ancient evidence on Spartan history especially of the eighth and seventh centuries. I shall not essay to proffer a reconstruction of that history or of any aspect of it; rather, I

shall on occasion broaden my view so as to consider various merits and defects of current historical approaches to the ancient world, for these are well illustrated in the recent literature which seeks to touch this dimmest fringe of early Greek history. We are, I fear, sometimes in danger of becoming Hellenistic rumor-mongering historians.

I

Some students of early Sparta find it possible to proclaim that there is abundant evidence on the subject – a remarkable statement which in itself suggests that the desire to know may be fabricating its own substantiation.⁵ In truth we have very little evidence, and not all of this is of equal value; the only extensive, continuous accounts, moreover, touching on early Sparta which have survived are the historical surveys in Pausanias, Books III and IV, and Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus*. In unconventional chronological order I shall begin with these late authors, and then take up in turn the classic authors of the late fifth and fourth centuries, Herodotus, and finally the truly contemporary material available for the eighth and seventh centuries.

Since Pausanias and Plutarch lived in the second century after Christ, they were as far removed from such an event as the First Messenian War as we are from the First Crusade. Neither the ancient world nor Sparta in particular had stood still across this long era, for the historian need give no credit to Cicero's sweeping assertion that the Spartans for 700 years had lived "by unchanged customs and laws."⁶ The rise and fall of Spartan hegemony, the much altered frame of Greek life in the Hellenistic world, the violent revolutions of the late third century BC – all had battered Sparta; and the archaizing efforts in customs and dialect which marked the somnolent valley of the Eurotas in the Roman Empire could not truly restore the past. Obvious as this observation may seem, the historical student must occasionally dwell on self-evident truths; a recent serious study of Sparta rests on the premise that imperial evidence may safely be read back across more than half a millennium to support a picture of early times.⁷ We live in an age when external change is god and all nations seek "growth," and so too often look back on the more slowly shifting patterns of Greco-Roman civilization as a closed, unchanging whole; not only in treating Spartan history but also in reconstructing other ancient systems scholars have unwarrantably combined in their reconstructions evidence which emanates from very different centuries.

Yet surely Pausanias and Plutarch both can be only as valuable as are their sources. In discussing the Messenian wars (Book IV) Pausanias is kind enough to suggest his sources – Myron the historian and Rhianus the epic poet – whether he used them directly or indirectly. The limitations of these Hellenistic authors have been well analyzed by Jacoby and more recently by Pearson; the latter, in particular, has shown the expansion of the patriotic, emotional tales which were manufactured to give Messenia an early history.⁸ No sober student

who has investigated this fascinating subject will be inclined to give any great weight to the rhetoric and anachronisms of Pausanias' Fourth Book – or to Diodorus, whose fragments in Book VIII show reliance upon Myron. The account of early Sparta itself which Pausanias prefixed to Book III is not so easily tracked down, but its obvious errors with regard to Spartan colonization and its romantic embroidery must surely awaken serious suspicion. The latest book on early Sparta, nonetheless, relies to an alarming extent upon Pausanias as a source, on the principle that a historian can safely mine “nuggets” out of otherwise worthless ore.⁹ Since I have commented on the “nugget” theory elsewhere, let me observe that sound historical method must lead a scholar to distrust any source much of which can be shown to be false – unless truly reliable material exists outside that source as a check. Pausanias, in sum, should be the last rather than the first author consulted by a student of early Spartan development.

The omnivorous Plutarch also knew a great many Hellenistic writers, but in his *Life of Lycurgus* he seems to have drawn heavily from Aristotle.¹⁰ So too the geographer Strabo leapt back across the Hellenistic world, in his brief comments on Sparta, to tap the writings of Ephorus.¹¹ The important group of writers of the fourth and fifth centuries B.C., reaching from Aristotle through Ephorus to Plato and Thucydides, forms our second major body of surviving evidence. In turning to this group I must omit the great mass of Hellenistic authors, for save for Polybius' comments in Book VI of his history we can deduce their views only from later Greek and Roman writers; it would be very dubious *Quellenkritik* [source criticism] to assess whence Myron, Rhianus, et al. drew their information. Possibly our views might be enlarged if we had the works of Sosibius, the third-century Lacedaemonian, on Spartan chronology and on Alcman; for my part I would rather have 200 consecutive new lines from Tyrtaeus.

II

The scholars from Aristotle back through Thucydides knew Sparta, at least in part, before the collapse of its inherited political power in Greece; and all of them lived before the major changes in life and thought which marked the Hellenistic era. One author, Xenophon, actually dwelt at Sparta in the fourth century, but unfortunately this Athenian exile did not see fit in his extensive writings to reproduce the information on earlier times which he must have absorbed.¹²

Yet Aristotle, Ephorus, Plato, and Thucydides would have serious defects as sources on early Sparta even if we had all their relevant studies. They witnessed Sparta only as master of Greece or immediately after its collapse when great internal alterations – which Aristotle noted in part – had occurred in Laconia. As a group they lived 300 to 400 years after the First Messenian War, as great a span of time as that which separates us from the Thirty Years'

War or the Spanish Armada. They were, moreover, Athenian or largely shared the Athenian point of view, a very important limitation in view of that Athenian deformation of earlier Greek history which was well begun by at least the early fourth century.¹³ To counter this distortion other Greeks could do little: the Spartans, on the evidence of Isocrates (who may be accounted a minor member of my second group), “pay no more attention to what is written in Athens than to what is said beyond the Pillars of Heracles.”¹⁴ Modern students cannot safely forget the tremendous effect of fifth- and fourth-century political developments both on the interests and on the views of contemporary authors as they looked into the past.

Worse yet, these scholars lived after that great wave of conscious analysis of human life marked by the appearance of the sophists, of Socrates, and of Hellanicus. The hurly-burly and turmoil of Athenian history led some men to seek an ideal in the – outwardly – static society of Sparta and so to distort its reality. Others essayed to order the past as a basis for the present; the great figure here was Hellanicus, but others too manipulated tradition and systematized chronology in techniques which reached their height (or depth) in the Hellenistic world. Although we realize how boldly the Greeks asserted their reason in art, in philosophy, and in other fields, modern historians do not always appreciate that the same boldness undoubtedly marked the creation of a sensible, continuous past by Hellanicus and his successors. Den Boer has done yeoman work in his methodical, detailed study of the manner in which the Greeks consolidated the Spartan king-lists as a major yardstick for that past; and anyone who studies his demonstration, or the essay on genealogical chronology by Mitchel, must emerge with the conclusion that the fair-seeming precision so established had worse than flimsy grounds.¹⁵

Even so, scholars today tend to accept a statement by a member of my second group simply because of their reputation. This tendency is more evident with regard to Aristotle and Thucydides than for Ephorus and Plato. Ephorus, in particular, is often harshly judged, though he had the good sense to utilize Tyrtaeus and Alcman extensively for early Sparta. Plato’s idealizing drive cannot be entirely ignored, yet a number of modern commentators have inclined to accept the purported helot revolt of 490 because Plato is its source, even though Herodotus – far closer in time and surer in knowledge – totally ignores it.¹⁶

On the other hand the reverence before Aristotle and Thucydides must alarm any sober historian. Aristotle’s *Constitution of the Spartans*, unfortunately, we do not have; but how many students of early Athens would accept his surviving *Constitution of the Athenians* en bloc?¹⁷ The fragments which do survive from his work on Sparta have no greater authority simply because they are fragments, but deserve careful criticism rather than being taken, as is so often the case, as canonical texts. If Aristotle, thus, saw or knew through Ephorus of a *discus* at Olympia bearing the names of Lycurgus and Iphitus, this is not an automatic guarantee that Lycurgus lived in 776, or even

that the *discus* was genuine.¹⁸ Or again, if in his comparative technique Aristotle reenforced the idea that Spartan institutions were borrowed from Crete, we need not follow the pan-Cretan myth of antiquity and modern scholarship.¹⁹

The modern cult of Thucydides deserves a major, general study. Far too many students take him as completely accurate for events of his own day, and the tendency is common to accept his reconstruction of earlier Greek history as virtually Holy Writ, rather than as the bold rationalization it actually is. Thucydides, perhaps fortunately, made only one major statement about early Sparta, and that comment was certainly in serious error. Sparta did *not* have the same form of government for 400 years before Thucydides' own day; and there was available to him quite enough evidence to prevent his making such a statement, had he been seriously interested in earlier times.²⁰

Although one must react strongly against the improper canonization of men like Aristotle and Thucydides, this must not be interpreted as meaning their utter dismissal. On the contrary the men of this second group are, in my judgment, the first genuine level of evidence we have reached, and such later work as that of Strabo and Plutarch is valuable only where it can be shown to reach back to this layer. What this observation actually means, however, demands a precise statement: these men are the latest who could have drawn information from the living structure of Spartan life and government which had been formed in much earlier days, and who might have tapped whatever tradition had survived. Yet a statement about early Sparta is not necessarily true because it occurs in any of this group, far removed in time and in spirit from that early era; historians must apply historical standards of evaluation to Aristotle no less than to Pausanias.

III

Herodotus, it will be noted, I have not included in my second group. For a variety of reasons the Father of History stands apart: and this solitary position makes him the most valuable classical source for early Sparta.

In the first place Herodotus framed and perhaps wrote his history before the rationalizing movement had begun seriously to systematize early chronology. It is amusing, and saddening, to encounter again and again in modern studies the assertion that Herodotus had no chronological sense; for what the authors of such comments really imply is that they miss in him the artificial regularity and precision of later Greek historiography. Herodotus rather shows us what sorts of inherited chronological indications the classic Greeks could really utilize; and I remain always amazed that he could couple chains based on quite different memory-patterns with such general success. Strasburger has admirably demonstrated that his work is firmly anchored in time;²¹ fundamentally it is not in serious error back through the sixth century.

Secondly, Herodotus knew Sparta reasonably well before the Peloponnesian

war began to loom on the horizon, i.e., before Athenian prejudice on the one hand and Athenian idealization on the other had introduced serious distortions. It is, moreover, generally agreed that he talked to Spartans of the generation of the Persian wars. So his account of the defeat of Xerxes had room for both Athens and Sparta and – alone of the men so far mentioned – he could directly hear living memories of the sixth century BC. Anyone who takes his scattered comments on Sparta in the late archaic era by themselves, without prejudice from subsequent views of Sparta, will obtain a rather surprising picture of a leading Greek power, busy in the Peloponnesus yet not easily conquering its neighbors; active too on the seas to the point of launching far more impressive naval expeditions than did contemporary Athens; influential as far as Italy on the one side and Asia Minor on the other. In truth, our picture of sixth-century Greece and of its temporal progression rests upon Herodotus more than upon any other single source, and the greater detail which is evident in modern texts as one passes from the seventh to the sixth century is a direct reflection of his indefatigable curiosity.

This is not to say that everything he reports can be right, or that its chronological position can always be determined with precision. Unfortunately, too, Herodotus refused to be a guide back into the seventh century. This failure is really a mark of his good judgment that men's memories would not extend so far. If he did not know anything worth repeating about Lycurgus – and, parenthetically, if his contemporary Hellanicus simply omitted the figure of the Spartan lawgiver altogether – what historical right have we to expect better information from later writers?²²

IV

Herodotus, in sum, shows us Sparta after its polity and way of life were basically formed, though there was great development in detail across the sixth and following centuries; and his story displays the resulting expansive force of Sparta. While the rise of Sparta to pre-eminence in Greece has its insignificant problems, the basic issue before us is fundamentally this: what contemporary, first-hand evidence exists for seventh- and eighth-century Sparta? Undoubtedly this is the point at which a historian should commence his investigations; if I have reversed the procedure, my excuse must be sought in the regrettable fact that modern students have far too often failed to distinguish true sources from secondary accounts. In order to judge their reconstructions, accordingly, one must first clear away the underbrush represented by the information of varying value which they draw from classical and later authors.

Of the three major lines of real evidence for the formative era of the Spartan city-state, the physical is the most secure. To some extent this comes to us through the description by Pausanias of what he saw in Sparta, together with other references; but the work of Gitiadas, Bathycles, and other sculptors and

architects seems almost entirely to be of the sixth and following centuries, and is sometimes predated by Pausanias. Classic Greece as a whole preserved very little of its early archaic stage. Another physical token is the famous *discus* at Olympia, presumably bearing the names of Lycurgus and Iphitus as guarantors of the Olympic peace; but this I would discard as almost surely another piece of the pious elaboration of later days. In view of what is known today of the spread of the Greek alphabet, so early a date as 776 for the *discus* would in any case be really impossible.²³

On the physical side, nonetheless, we do have evidence which the ancients lacked, thanks to the archeological investigation of some sites in and near Sparta. There has not been nearly enough such exploration; one wonders, for instance, how much the Spartan port of Gythium could tell us. But what has been found is enough to show a Sparta which classical authors either did not know or had no interest in depicting.

In the Mycenaean and Protogeometric eras, to treat this evidence briefly, the Laconian plain shows signs of occupation but no particular achievement: valuable as I consider archeological evidence to be, I would hesitate to essay from it a political reconstruction of developments in that period.²⁴ In the eighth and seventh centuries the evidence broadens out to show that Sparta reacted enthusiastically to the new skills and delights of life which Greece was discovering, partly through stimuli from the Near East but mainly arising out of native progress. The ivories of Orthia are famous; Laconian pottery was widely sold from Taras to Cyrene and to Samos; Spartan bronzes turn up in numbers at Olympia and many other sites.²⁵ Although not all students of ancient Sparta even yet fully appreciate the resulting picture, the fundamental point is clear – Sparta shared the artistic and literary currents of archaic Greece. The revelation of overseas contacts in the pottery and other material, incidentally, accords superbly with the picture Herodotus drew of sixth-century Sparta.

It is particularly important, for two quite different reasons, to interpret correctly the decline in the Spartan arts in the sixth century. First, that decline is all too often taken as a lesson for modern men that militarism is intellectually debilitating. This view of militarism may well be correct, but if it is the main ethical conclusion we are to draw from Spartan history then we shall badly misread that history and, moreover, shall fail to appreciate the important role of Sparta in stabilizing the political structure of the Greek world. In any case militarism and the decline of Spartan arts have no immediate connection. If Laconian ware lost its markets by the mid-sixth century, one must remember that the same was true of the vaunted Corinthian potteries; in both cases native developments in the overseas markets, plus the invincible onrush of Attic ware, were the primary forces, not the rise of a military spirit in either Sparta or Corinth.²⁶ The continued popularity of Spartan bronzes on into the fifth century is too little noted in this respect;²⁷ and in general any scholar who wished to link, for Sparta, militarism and

intellectual decline must come down to the classic era proper – where he will have to face the fact that the Parthenon was built with the fruits of Athenian imperialism.

In the second place, the decline of Spartan arts, such as it was, did not necessarily have any connection with internal political reorganization and cannot properly be employed as a means of dating specific political or social shifts. What the physical evidence shows, in essence, is the frame of civilization within which we must place these shifts; to the importance of this fact I shall return below.

A second line of evidence, which is more directly pertinent to the reorganization of Spartan political life, is the literary material. In reality we have more testimony to poetic activity at Sparta in the seventh century than for any other Greek state, including Athens. Unfortunately the works of Terperander, Tyrtaeus, and Alcman have not survived intact, but the fragments, while tantalizing, are extremely useful. Alcman's *Partheneion* accords beautifully with the physical evidence of seventh-century luxury (*habrosyne*).²⁸ About Terperander clustered a memory that he put down or was otherwise connected with *stasis*.²⁹ The fragments of Tyrtaeus must certainly demonstrate the existence of serious internal troubles; both the title of one poem, *Eunomia*, and the precious if perplexing scrap quoted from it about Spartan institutions, are clear pointers. His reference, too, to Theopompus and a Messenian war is our firmest anchor for seventh-century chronology, given the general consensus that Tyrtaeus flourished about the mid-point in the century³⁰ and the fact that Aristotle or others probably found in his poetry the statement Theopompus and Polydorus overlapped as kings.

Subsumed under the literary evidence is the famous *rhētra*, quoted by Plutarch apparently from Aristotle. In wrestling with the difficulties of its proper textual reading, its relation to Tyrtaeus frag. 3, and its precise nature as oracle or law,³¹ students may well lose sight of the amazing fact that we have an undoubtedly genuine constitutional enactment *in prose* before 600 BC.³² Indeed, since the *rhētra* (or its rider) must be brought into connection with kings Theopompus and Polydorus, we must place it in the earlier part of the seventh century – but I need hardly point out that any effort to move it on to 776 or earlier must shatter on the alphabetic evidence alone.³³ Even so, we have no other precise statement of governmental organization this early; and its very existence must be taken as a more democratic than oligarchic token.³⁴

Finally, as a third line of evidence there is tradition and legend handed on orally to the point where it was written down. This is the weakest type of evidence as measured by the historical principles of our grandfathers; but scholars nowadays often display remarkable – and frightening – confidence that they can obtain valuable truths from it.³⁵ There is, however, no need here to repeat an analysis of its theoretical defects when uncontrolled by other, more certain material; for, in truth, despite Hippias' assertion that fifth-century Spartans relished hearing tales of their past our sources have preserved

remarkably little of this material.³⁶ Whatever we may think of the account of early Rome which Livy recites, it is both more extensive and more suggestive than the smooth pabulum of Pausanias, Book III, on Sparta; Laconian religious survivals, such as those connected with Orthia, are valuable but not extensively reported;³⁷ memories of the Dorian invasion and of early conflicts with Amyclae are at best plausible pointers. Nor does the evidence of the Spartan dialect, mostly in late inscriptions, carry us far.³⁸

The most discussed material under this heading consists of the king-lists, the ephor-lists, and also the lists of Olympic victors. The last of these, systematized by Hippias, may or may not stretch back securely to 776; what we cannot surely determine is the degree to which early events were linked to Olympic dates before the era of Hippias. Is the battle of Hysiae between Sparta and Argos firmly anchored to 669 on this basis?³⁹ The Spartan king-lists were utilized by Eratosthenes and others as a yardstick to cover the dark ages from the fall of Troy to the first Olympiad (Diodorus VII. 8), but this is no guarantee that they were uniquely preserved with absolute accuracy.⁴⁰ Indeed, they are obviously suspect in the very names of such kings as Prytanis before 700 BC; the Eurypontid line was not reported in precisely the same fashion in all sources; and most certainly the investigations of Den Boer have proved that the assignment of precise dates to the kings was a later construction.⁴¹ There is no evidence that regnal years were preserved; whereas Apollodorus, Eusebius, and others place the accession of Theopompus about 786, on the basis of Tyrtaeus we must move him down to about 700. If historians are disinclined to accept the Roman king-lists as authentic, why should the Spartan lists be more reliable once a student moves back beyond 700 BC.⁴²

V

Our great desire to know the origins of the Spartan system has led scholars much too commonly to a faulty determination of *what* is evidence – an effort to save and make use of everything reported in any ancient author. Yet perhaps worse than this mixture of invalid and valid materials has been the application of improper historical methods even to the first-hand materials which do survive for the seventh century and, to a lesser degree, for the late eighth century. And this era, I may observe, was pretty surely the crucial point.

Above all, a student must place early Sparta against the background of early Greece; for the Spartans did not live within a charmed circle, exempt from the ebb and flow of contemporary life. The Spartans, true, were not exactly like any other state – the golden age for diversity in pottery styles was, after all, the Orientalizing epoch of the seventh century – yet they shared much the same structure of life. The problem is to determine how and why they bent apart as the archaic era progressed into the classic; Roussel and several other sober students have properly placed Spartan history in this light.

Time and space will not permit me to offer a reconstruction of early Spartan

development here, but some of my views will naturally have been implicit in the preceding discussion. I would, thus, oppose the tendency to accelerate Spartan progress; it is preposterous to place the origin of the so-called Lycurgan constitution, i.e., a tightly organized Spartan polity, in the tenth, the ninth, or even the eighth century. Corinth and Megara, for instance, became unified city-states only in the eighth century, as did Greek communities as a whole. Again, Argos and Athens expanded their sway over neighboring districts only slowly; and in this respect the incomplete absorption of the *poleis* of the *perioikoi* into the Spartan political system, as against the complete integration into Athens of the Tetrapolis, Thoricus, Eleusis, et al., suggests much about Spartan aggression.⁴³ By the later eighth century, however, tremendous expansive forces were at work within the Greek world. Their cultural fruit is abundantly evident in the Spartan excavations and in the poetry of Alcman; and against this dynamic background the possibility of political reorganization becomes apparent.

Other evidence points in the same direction. Writing was not known until the eighth century or much used until the seventh; the *demos* or hoplite class could not have exercised an important role until the seventh century;⁴⁴ in all, we must come down to a point in these hundred years – but not necessarily to the end of the seventh century or into the sixth, as some have argued.⁴⁵ The evidence of the *rhētra*, combined with the reflection in Tyrtaeus, suggests to me, as to most observers, that we have to do with a deliberate step, one to be placed beside the other evidence of political codification and reorganization as seventh-century Greece moved onto a conscious plane of political activity from traditional custom and sought to master the many tensions of its political growth.⁴⁶ That these tensions, in Sparta, were closely connected to the Messenian struggles and so bore fruit also in revision of the military organization and methods of training seems evident even though we need not take the Messenian wars as being as systematic as were the wars of later, classic Greece.

To connect this reform with Lycurgus, however, seems unnecessary. Plutarch found nothing certain about his life; Hellanicus and Thucydides far earlier seem to have passed him over; Herodotus knew really nothing; and Tyrtaeus – as far as we have his poetry – does not mention Lycurgus. Much which eventually was attributed to him, as the ban on gold and silver money, is palpably false or anachronistic; and men could not even agree to which royal house he belonged. A modern scholar must rightly be more than suspicious about his role or even his historical existence.⁴⁷

On the social side, which I have not been able to consider in detail, students would do well to drop those interpretations which are phrased in terms of Dorian blood; if Crete and Sparta showed social similarities, this is evidence not for Dorian kinship or for Spartan indebtedness, but to a similar evolution out of a generally prevalent structure of life in dark-age Greece.⁴⁸ Here, I may observe, anthropological parallels are sometimes genuinely useful if not

pressed too far, and have been so drawn since the days of George Grote.⁴⁹ On the whole Spartan society, together with the classes of helots and *perioikoi*, must surely have evolved and continued to evolve in classic and later times.

Within the framework of archaic Greece the evidence which specifically bears on early Sparta fits, in general, remarkably well. In our reconstruction of early Spartan history, however, let us never assume that any ancient source was impeccable; the farther we move from the seventh century, the more cautious we must be. In the urge to give detailed accounts of ancient societies there is far too great a tendency nowadays to rely upon secondary sources because they are fuller – forgetting that they are such because the ancients too wished “to know more” as they passed from classic to Hellenistic times.⁵⁰ Credulity, in truth, seems to be rising in reaction to the overly sceptical attitude of nineteenth-century scholars; and, like Isis revivifying Osiris, historians are busily engaged in pumping air into ancient fictions. Moses has become virtually a historical character; Lycurgus has been resuscitated; soon, no doubt, Romulus will again stride across pages of Roman history.⁵¹

But we are historians, seeking to restore past reality. Historical work must always be judged on that basis, not on the intellectual skill and rhetorical dexterity with which an author may manipulate and combine miscellaneous, inadequately criticized bits into a towering edifice of gossamer True, the results of a genuinely historical approach to any ancient problems may have regrettable limitations as to completeness of detail, but this we must accept. On the present point our evidence is actually enough to suggest the basic reasons why, when, and how early Sparta evolved toward the pattern known in classic times. One cannot say the same for Athens in the eighth and seventh centuries; there, if anywhere, is a miracle of human progress in its Greek phase.

APPENDIX

I regret that Franz Kiechle, *Lakonien und Sparta* (Munich, 1963), reached me only after the present essay had been prepared for the Fourth International Classical Congress. Although he seeks too far to save the legendary evidence, his study brings together valuable evidence (135ff., 185ff., 203ff.) that economic and social distinctions remained important throughout the archaic era.

[†] First published in *Historia* 14, 1965, 257–72.

¹ Although this essay is not intended to be a bibliographical survey, those studies which I have found especially useful or illustrative will be noted at appropriate points. I have cited the following by author's name only: K. M. T. Chrimes, *Ancient Sparta* (Manchester, 1949); W. Den Boer, *Laconian Studies* (Amsterdam, 1954); G. L. Huxley, *Early Sparta* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962); H. Michell, *Sparta* (Cambridge, 1952); Pierre Roussel, *Sparta* (2d ed., Paris, 1960). The beginning student of early Sparta should start with the well-balanced, judicious survey by Roussel.

² Michell 198–204; F. Oilier, *Le mirage spartiate* (Paris, 1933); A. Blakeway, *CR*, XLIX (1935), 184, however, correctly limits this idealization to the period after 450 – a complementary force to the eulogies of Athens (below, n. 13).

³ H. T. Parker, *The Cult of Antiquity and the French Revolutionaries* (Chicago, 1937), 133–35, 152f. (Rousseau, Mably, et al.; Voltaire, to be sure, thought quite otherwise of Sparta.)

4 Observe the opening remarks of Helmut Berve's *Sparta* (Leipzig, 1937), 7.

5 E.g., H. W. Stubbs, *JHS*, LXXIII (1953), 170; N. G. L. Hammond, *JHS*, LXX (1950), 57. Contra: A. Aymard, *REG*, LXIV (1951), 344–45; V. Ehrenberg, *Gnomon*, XXV (1953), 180; Michell vii; L. Pearson, *Historia*, XI (1962), 398. That this obscurity, however, was a conscious policy of the Spartan State (Chrimēs 205–06 and others) I much doubt.

6 *Pro Flacco* 26. 63; Livy XXXVIII. 34, together with Plutarch, *Life of Philopoemen* 16. 5–6, shows clearly one major break.

7 Chrimēs; well reviewed by A. M. Woodward in *Historia*, I (1950), 616–34, and *JHS*, LXXIII (1953), 171–73, or by W. Den Boer in *Mnemosyne*, IV (1951), 182–85.

8 F. Jacoby, *FGH*, Dritter Teil: Kommentar (1943), 109–81; L. Pearson, “The Pseudo-History of Messenia and Its Authors,” *Historia*, XI (1962), 397–426, who counters Jacoby's assignment of the Rhianus epic to 490 B.C. See also J. Kroymann, “Sparta und Messenien,” *Neue philologische Untersuchungen*, XI (1937); E. Schwartz, “Die messenische Geschichte bei Pausanias,” *Philologus*, XCII (1937), 19–46; F. Kiechle, *Messenische Studien* (Kallmünz, 1959), who discusses Rhianus in cc. 6–7.

9 Despite moments of doubt (pp. 19, 34) Huxley's study is based very largely on Pausanias; a remarkable example of the elaboration which intellectual dexterity can build on this gossamer is his account of Charmidas (pp. 27–38). Without going this far, W. G. Forrest, “The Date of the Lykourgan Reforms in Sparta,” *Phoenix*, XVII (1963), 157–79, treats Pausanias seriously (176–78) in a very useful study. The fact that Pausanias III. 7. 4, IV. 14. 3 (also Strabo VIII. 6. 11, C373) notes the Spartan settlement of refugees from Asine, which was destroyed by Argos just before 700 (O. Frödin and A. W. Persson, *Asine* [Stockholm, 1933], 437) does not prove his account generally reliable. I have discussed the “nugget” theory in “La ricostruzione della storia greca arcaica,” *Rivista di filologia*, XCII (1964), 5–23.

10 On Plutarch's veracity cf. Den Boer 128, 169; C. Theander, “Plutarch und die Geschichte,” *Bulletin de la Société royale des lettres de Lund* 1950–51, 1–86.

11 VIII. 5. 4 (C364) etc. But we cannot be sure that Strabo VI. 1. 16 (C257) on Messenian settlement at Rhegium comes from Antiochus of Syracuse, as Kiechle argues; see E. Meyer, *Gnomon*, XXXII (1906), 215–16, and on the settlement early in the fifth century, E. S. G. Robinson, *JHS*, LXVI (1946), 13–20.

12 On the Constitution of the Lacedaemonians see K. M. T. Chrimēs, *The Respublica Lacedaemoniorum Ascribed to Xenophon* (Manchester, 1948); F. Ollier, *Xenophon, La République des Lacédémoniens* (Lyons, 1934); W. A. Kasten, *Inquiritur quid Xenophontis Lac. Pol. valeat ad Lacedaemoniorum instituta cognoscenda* (Utrecht-Middleburg, 1921).

13 In “Why Did the Greeks Defeat the Persians,” *La Parola del Passato*, fasc. 86 (1962), 321–32, I have discussed one example; on the Athenian deformation of Spartan development in particular, see Forrest, *Phoenix*, XVII (1936), 162–65.

14 *Panathenaicus* 250. One must not, however, overlook the possible effect of king Pausanias' essay on Lycurgus (Strabo VIII. 5. 5, C366).

15 Den Boer is undoubtedly right in placing the weight of chronological crystallization in the fifth and fourth centuries; but I would not share his views that we can win a solid basis for dating any early event (e.g., the assignment of Lycurgus to 776). One aspect he elaborates further in “Political Propaganda in Greek Chronology,” *Historia*, V (1956), 162–77. See also Fordyce Mitchel, “Herodotus' Use of Genealogical Chronology,” *Phoenix*, X (1956), 48–69; D. W. Prakken, *Studies in Greek Genealogical Chronology* (Lancaster, Pa., 1943); and below.

16 Plato, *Laws* III. 69 2D, 69 8D–E. Accepted by W. P. Wallace, “Kleomenes, Marathon, the Helots and Arkadia,” *JHS*, LXXIV (1954), 32–35; Kiechle, Huxley, et al.; properly rejected by Pearson, *Historia*, XI (1962), 420–25; and Den Boer 82, who dismisses the war “as pure imagination” (see also *Historia*, V [1956], 168–74).

17 Roussel 7 justly notes the distorting effect of theoretical views in Aristotle's historical portrayal of Sparta.

18 Phlegon of Tralles, *FGH*, Zweiter Teil B (1929) 257 F 1; Pausanias V. 20. 1; Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus* 1. 1 = Aristotle frag. 533. See below.

19 Herodotus I. 65 reports that the Spartans themselves thought Lycurgus brought his ideas from Crete; Aristotle, *Politics* II. 10 and frag. 535, essayed to prove it; but see the criticism by Polybius VI. 45.

20 Thucydides I. 18. 1; A. W. Gomme, *Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, I (Oxford, 1959), 128–31; Den Boer 83–84, who seeks to save Thucydides' reputation by postulating that he meant 10 generations of 40 years each. A. Andrewes' view, *CQ*, XXXII (1938), 93–95, is generally rejected, though it seeks to counter the difficulty noted above. The legends connected with Terpendar, if no other, were known at Athens by the time of Thucydides (see below n. 29).

21 Hermann Strasburger, “Herodots Zeitrechnung,” *Historia*, V (1956), 129–61 = *Herodot*, ed. W. Marg (Munich, 1962), 677–715. I hope to deal with Greek historical concepts of time at length elsewhere.

[“Historical and Philosphical Time,” *History and Theory*, 6, 1966, 24–33, reprinted in C. G. Starr, *Essays on Ancient History: A Selection of Articles and Reviews* (eds A. Ferrill and T. Kelly), Leiden: Brill, 1979.]

²² Herodotus I. 65–66 does not place Lycurgus about 600; cf. Den Boer 25–29, and Hammond, *JHS*, LXX (1950), 53–55. Hellanicus’ omission of Lycurgus: Strabo VIII. 5. 5 (C366) = *FGrH* Erster Teil (1923) 4 F 116.

²³ Den Boer 104–10 builds heavily on this *discus*; see also Hammond, *JHS*, LXX (1950), 64. But see Chrimes 321–27; K. J. Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte*, I. 2 (2d ed.; Strassburg, 1913), 256; Forrest, *Phoenix*, XVII (1963), 168–69; and on the alphabet, below n. 31.

²⁴ In arguing for a political unification of Sparta by the ninth century, Hammond, *JHS*, LXX (1950), 63–64, illustrates the misuse of physical evidence. For the extent of our archeological material, see the following notes.

²⁵ Ivories: *The Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia at Sparta*, ed. R. M. Dawkins (London, 1929), 203–48; Barnett, *JHS*, LXVIII (1948), 14–15. Pottery: E. A. Lane, “Lakonian Vase Painting,” *BSA*, XXXIV (1933–34), 99–189; Paola Pelagatti, “La ceramica laconica del Musè di Taranto,” *Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene*, n.s. XVII–XVIII (1955–56), 7–44, a handsome collection now well displayed; J. P. Droop in *Artemis Orthia*, 52–116; the recent revision of dating by J. Boardman, “Artemis Orthia and Chronology,” *BSA*, LVIII (1963), 1–7. Bronzes and sculpture: Ernst Langlotz, *Frühgriechische Bildhauerschulen* (Nürnberg, 1927), 86–98; G. Lippold, *Handbuch der Archäologie*, III. 1 (Munich, 1950), 30–33, with full references; G. Karo, *Greek Personality in Archaic Sculpture* (Oberlin, 1948), 143–68. I have sketched the general course of development in *Origins of Greek Civilization, 1100–650 B.C.* (New York, 1961), 221ff.

²⁶ A. Blakeway, *CR*, XLIX (1934), 185; R. H. Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery* (London, 1960), 93–99; Huxley 63–64, though his explanation of Spartan austerity as a product of this economic decline (p. 73) is less than likely.

²⁷ See recently, e.g., Herbert Hoffmann, “Two Unknown Greek Bronzes of the Archaic Period,” *AJA*, LXVIII (1964), 185–88; E. Kunze, “Die Ausgrabungen in Olympia,” *Archaiologikon Deltion*, XVII (1961/2), 12, 122. Even the Vix crater has been called Spartan – a testimony to the respect felt for Spartan bronzesmiths, even if unlikely.

²⁸ D. L. Page, *Alcman: The Partheneion* (Oxford, 1951); P. Ox. 2390, frag. 2, a commentary on Alcman, helps to confirm his date c. 630. On the luxury of the age see Santo Mazzarino, *Fra Oriente e occidente* (Florence, 1947), 215ff.

²⁹ Cratinus, frag. 243k; Aristotle, frag. 545; on to Diodorus VIII. 28, etc. See Forrest, *Phoenix*, XVII (1963), 163–65. Further signs of stress are given in Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus* 2. 2–3, 5.13, though perhaps more from logical than from historical necessity; observe too Aristotle, *Pol.* V. 6. 11–2 (1306b); and below, n. 46.

³⁰ Den Boer 70 n. 1 on his date. As Jacoby, *Hermes*, LIII (1918), 7–8, observed, Tyrtaeus does not seem to have been known to non-Spartan sources before the fourth century. E. Schwartz, “Tyrtaeos,” *Hermes*, XXXIV (1899), 426–68, accordingly once considered his poetry a later forgery: but cf. his view in *Philologus*, XCII (1937), 22. Proper interpretation of Tyrtaeus is not assisted by labeling him an “able propagandist” (Huxley 54); cf. Forrest, *Phoenix*, XVII (1963), 174, 178.

³¹ The best linguistic study of the *rhetra* is N. G. L. Hammond, “The Lycurgian Reform at Sparta,” *JHS*, LXX (1950), 42–64, though I do not agree with his dating; H. T. Wade-Gery, “The Spartan Rhetra in Plutarch, *Lycurgus* VI,” *CQ*, XXXVII (1943), 62–72; XXXVIII (1944), 1–9, 112–26 (= *Essays in Greek History* [Oxford, 1958], 37–85), is useful, but not always convincing. See also A. G. Tsopanakis, *La Rhètre de Lycurge* (Thessalonica, 1954); David Butler, “Competence of the Damos in the Spartan Rhetra,” *Historia*, XI (1962), 385–96; Den Boer 153–96; Chrimes 413–23, 475–89; Max Treu, “Der Schlusssatz der grossen Rhetra,” *Hermes*, LXXVI (1941), 22–42; A. von Blumenthal, “Zur ‘lykurgischen’ Rhetra,” *Hermes*, LXXVII (1942), 212–15; H. Rudolph, “Die lykurgische Rhetra und die Begründung des spartanischen Staates,” *Festschrift Snell* (Munich, 1956), 61–76.

³² The undue scepticism of E. Meyer and Wilamowitz-Moellendorf still continues; cf. Th. Meier, *Des Wesen der spartanischen Staatsordnung*, *Klio* Beiheft 42 (1939), 89.

³³ Forrest, *Phoenix*, XVII (1963), 169, sums up the limiting factors of alphabet, Delphic oracle, and hoplite development; see especially L. H. Jeffery, *Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* (Oxford, 1961), 12–21.

³⁴ A. R. Burn, *Lyric Age of Greece* (New York, 1960) 224 properly observes this fact with regard to the well-known inscription from Chios. Note too the emphasis on the term “Equals” for the full Spartans.

³⁵ From the sober pen of A. Momigliano, let me quote the recent observation in *JRS*, LIII (1963), 98: “I assume that the literary tradition, however doubtful, must still be our guide ... no necropolis, however rich, can ever replace the long tradition of a nation.” The sentiment is outwardly unobjectionable, but can we really proceed on this basis?

³⁶ Plato, *Hippias Major* 285C; Pratinas (Athenaeus XIV. 632F) proves no more than their preservation

of old songs. The statement of Huxley 19 that "where Pausanias can be checked he shows himself to have drawn upon a strong local tradition of the Spartans themselves" is a remarkable one. On the relative quantity of Spartan and Roman material, see Momigliano, *JRS*, LIII (1963), 109.

³⁷ S. Wide, *Lakonische Kulte* (Leipzig, 1893); Felix Bölle, "Zu lakonischen Festen," *RM*, LXXVIII (1929), 124–43.

³⁸ Emile Bourguet, *Le dialecte laconien* (Paris, 1927), assembles most of the evidence: Page, *Alcman: The Partheneion*, 105ff.; F. Solmsen, "Vordorisches in Lakonien," *RM*, LXII (1907), 328–38. Vittore Pisani, "Roma e Sparta," *Saggi di linguistica storica* (Turin, 1959), 220–33, is an unfortunate example of the results which may be obtained.

³⁹ Forrest, *Phoenix*, XVII (1963), 166–67; E. Will, *Korinthiaka* (Paris, 1955), 351–52.; Den Boer 59. Huxley 29, 42, seems the most confident that "Hippias was a clever man, who would not have been the victim of a forgery;" on the Olympic lists in general, Den Boer 42–51, 95–96, 101; Gomme, *Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, I, 420–40; Th. Lenschau *Philologus*, XCI (1936/7), 396–411, telescoped them to 632 B.C. onwards. The material is in Luigi Moretti, "Olympionikai," *Memorie*, Acc. Nazionale dei Lincei, ser. 8, vol. VIII. 2 (1957).

⁴⁰ On the argument by E. Meyer, *Forschungen zur alten Geschichte*, I (Halle, 1892), 170, that Hecataeus so used them and gave 40 years to a generation, see the destructive analysis of Mitchell, *Phoenix*, X (1956), 64–65.

⁴¹ Den Boer 5–29 and *Historia*, V (1956), 164; Huxley n. 253; Chrimes 333–39. I must omit such Delphic oracles as that of about 750 on the land of Aigys, though accepted by Huxley 22 and many others; H. W. Parke and D. E. W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle* (2d ed.; Oxford, 1956), seem to me to provide adequate evidence on the general unreliability of such oracles; and certainly the history of Delphi shows that it played no part till the seventh century. On the ephor list see Den Boer 33–36.

⁴² See generally Sir John Forsdyke, *Greece before Homer: Ancient Chronology and Mythology* (London, 1956): Burn, *Lyric Age*, 28, 403–08; my *Origins of Greek Civilization*, 94ff., 222ff.

⁴³ From the literary tradition one may picture the early expansion of Sparta as rapid (Ephorus in Strabo VIII. 5. 4, C364–5) or slow (Pausanias III. 5–7). Neither in itself has superior value, and the physical evidence is of no avail; one must turn to the general development of Greece in the era. See, e.g., T. J. Dunbabin, "The Early History of Corinth," *JHS*, LXVIII (1948), 59–69; Will, *Korinthiaka*; my essay on "The Early Greek City-State," *La Parola del Passato*, fasc. 53 (1957), 97–108. On the incomplete political unification of Laconia, cf. Herodotus VII. 234; Xenophon, *Hellenica* VI. 5. 21; Hammond, *JHS*, LXX (1950), 64. An example of the danger in taking Spartan development purely by itself is Chrimes' argument (412–13) that the reform of the constitution must have occurred before 800, when Spartan expansion on her view began. While I cannot agree with her view (304) that the Messenian struggle had no major political effect, she is correct in part (289–95, 300) in minimizing the extent of the early conquest. An extended, but older survey of Spartan expansion is given by L. Pareti, *Storia di Sparta arcaica*, I, (Florence, 1920), 154–230. On the First Messenian War see also Angelo Brelich, *Guerri, agoni e culti nella Grecia arcaica* (Bonn, 1961), 34–39; Th. Lenschau, "Die messenischen Kriege," *Philologus*, XCI (1936/7), 289–307, who pulls the date down to 670–50.

On the wars between Argos and Sparta see the dissertation of Thomas Kelly, "The Early History of Argos" (Ph. D. Illinois 1964), who finds it very unlikely that the two states were at odds seriously before each had consolidated its local leadership.

⁴⁴ The military reorganization has been much debated since Wilamowitz-Moellendorf's publication of Tyrtaios frag. 1 (SBB Berlin 1918, 728–36); see recently Hammond, *JHS*, LXX (1950), 50–52; Michell 100, 235–36; Chrimes 312–9, 361–62, 381–82, 398; Wade-Gery, *CQ*, XXXVIII (1944), 117–22. The arguments must be put against the background of the phalanx development: see H. L. Lorimer, *Homer and the Monuments* (London, 1950), 462–63; my *Origins of Greek Civilization*, 332–34; John Boardman, *BSA*, LII (1957), 28–29; A. Andrewes, *Probouleusis: Sparta's Contribution to the Technique of Government* (Oxford, 1954), a brief essay which expresses more historical judgment than several recent full-length studies.

⁴⁵ As H. T. Wade-Gery, *Cambridge Ancient History*, III (Cambridge, 1925), 558–62; V. Ehrenberg, *Neugründer des Staates* (Munich, 1925), but see his essay "Der Damos im archaischen Sparta," *Hermes*, LXVIII (1933), 288–305.

⁴⁶ Chrimes 218–45 Puts the change as from feudal to state organization; Den Boer, *Mnemosyne*, IV (1951), 183, disagrees. Michell 3 improperly speaks of "relapse." Here, once more, the whole background of stress and state consolidation in the seventh century must be kept firmly in mind; see generally A. Andrewes, *The Greek Tyrants* (London, 1956), 74–76, and Roussel 42–44, 73.

⁴⁷ Lycurgus is accepted by Michell 22–25; Chrimes 305–47; observe the statement by R. Flacelière, *REA*, LVII (1955), 373, that after reading Den Boer he is no longer so certain Lycurgus was a myth – a testimony to the shift now under way. Simonides assigned him to the Eurypontids (F. Jacoby, *Apollodorus*

Chronik, Philologische Untersuchungen, XVI [1902], 110–14); Herodotus I. 65 to the Agiads. The older view of Lycurgus is well shown in Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte*, I. 2, 253–56; Berve, *Sparta*, 33, remained dubious in the 1930s.

⁴⁸ Chrimes 209–18 is, I think, right in showing significant lines of difference; see also Hammond, *JHS*, LXX (1950), 58. Yet cf. Den Boer 267. On Crete see P. Demargne, *La Crète dédalique* (Paris, 1947); R. F. Willetts, *Aristocratic Society in Ancient Crete* (London, 1955); the valuable evidence in J. K. Brock, *Fortetsa* (Cambridge, 1957); Starr, *Origins of Greek Civilization*, 133–35.

⁴⁹ Grote, *History of Greece*, II ch. vi, comparing initiation to that of the Mandan Indians. See also M. P. Nilsson, “Die Grundlagen des spartanischen Lebens,” *Klio*, XII (1912), 308–40; H. Jeanmaire, “La cryptie lacédémonienne,” *REG*, XXVI (1913), 121–50; W. S. Ferguson, “The Zulus and the Spartan,” *Harvard African Studies*, II (1918), 197–234. Michell 64–77 and Chrimes 277–8 5 survey the evidence for the helots and *perioikoi*.

⁵⁰ While reflecting on this tendency, I was happy to find in C. Hignett, *Xerxes’ Invasion of Greece* (Oxford, 1963), 7–25, a discussion of the postulate that Herodotus can be corrected by authors of the fourth and later centuries as if they had access to superior sources, he strongly attacks this “alarming tendency to re-examine the secondary sources, even the least trustworthy of them for fresh illumination,” and cites W. K. Pritchett, *AJA*, LXIII (1959), 259–61, for rejecting “the attempt to treat all the items in the ancient evidence, whatever their date, as complementary parts of a single whole.”

⁵¹ Dangerous signs of this possibility appear in Momigliano, *JRS*, LIII (1963), 112; E. Gjerstad in *Etruscan Culture: Land and People* (Malmö, 1962), 100, rejects Romulus but quite accepts Numa.

PART II

Power and Government at Sparta

Introduction

The two contributions to this part introduce another important methodological issue in understanding Sparta, that of how we are to balance descriptions of aspects of the Spartan system with narrative accounts of how the system functioned on particular occasions. Are we to privilege the analysis which purports to give an intelligent overview of operations without the distortions which examination of any specific incident or individual will probably introduce, or do we suspect the intellectual agenda which underlies all such theoretical treatments and prefer to reconstruct for ourselves the system from the record of its particular manifestations?¹ There is no certain answer, and slight differences in emphases will lead to divergent conclusions, as in these two discussions by Andrewes (Chapter 2) and de Ste Croix (Chapter 3).

Sparta achieved the reputation of being one of the best-governed of states known to the Greeks, with the Cretans and remote Carthage as the only rivals (Arist., *Pol.* ii.6–8, 1269a29–1273b27). If in reality this reflected the preference for a respectful oligarchic system on the part of intellectuals, especially at democratic Athens where they might resent the domination of the unwashed masses in the Assembly,² the choice came to be justified by a theoretical presentation of Sparta as an ideal mixed constitution. According to this, elements of the three main constitutional forms, monarchy, aristocracy or oligarchy, and democracy, were blended at Sparta into a stable harmony (e.g. Arist., *Pol.* 2.3, 1265b.36; 4.7, 1294b.14–40). The two kings obviously provided the monarchic element, the powers of the Gerousia (twenty-eight men aged over 60, chosen for life, plus the two kings) and/or the five annual Ephors constituted the oligarchic, while democracy was injected through the role of the people in electing both Ephors, who might represent popular interests, and the Gerousia. The discrepancy between theory and contemporary experience is demonstrated by the inconsistencies in Aristotle's own treatment of Sparta in the *Politics*,³ since he also described Sparta as a state where aristocracy had degenerated into democracy (2.6, 1270b.17–18) and perhaps envisaged that it would experience the complete 'cycle' of constitutional change through oligarchy and democracy to tyranny (5.10, 1316a.20–5).

In view of the differing assessments in the ancient sources, it is not surprising that modern scholars do not agree. One major source of debate is the enigmatic formulation of the Great Rhetra, the foundation document of the Spartan constitution which is preserved, probably via Aristotle's lost *Constitution of the Spartans*, in Plutarch's *Lycurgus* (6). Any presentation of its

terms, or even a translation, inevitably introduces distortions, and so I would recommend students to consult as many translations as possible and then consider some of the clearer modern discussions.⁴ The date of the Rhetra is early but uncertain; its inevitable link with Lycurgus does not help pin it down, but the connection of the text with the Delphic Oracle, which is said to have validated it, is rather more helpful since it points to the later seventh century as the earliest plausible context.⁵ By granting specific powers to the Gerousia to introduce proposals to the Assembly, by ordaining regular meetings of the Assembly and by giving the Assembly the right to take decisions, the Rhetra appears to delimit the unfettered power of the two kings (who are only mentioned in their capacity as members of the Gerousia). On the other hand the power of the Assembly is also restricted, since, in what is normally regarded as a later rider,⁶ the Gerousia and kings have a right to set aside its decisions. The Ephors are notable by their absence, which might support the tradition that they were a later addition to the constitutional arrangements, at the instigation of King Theopompus (Arist., *Pol.* 5.9, 1313a.25–33).⁷

Herodotus believed that Sparta had, at some point in the past, experienced bad government and civil strife in contrast to its later stability (1.65.2–5), and this view was shared, or taken over, by Thucydides (1.18.1). It is, however, notable how often we hear about disputes within the Spartan ruling elite, often but not always between the two kings: Demaratus with Cleomenes, Agesilaus with Agesipolis and then Cleombrotus, the problems of Pleistoanax and Agis II, the ambitions of Pausanias the regent and Lysander. Sparta was clearly a highly competitive political arena in which individuals, almost always kings or members of the royal family, could build up substantial power for themselves. We are inevitably best informed about the tensions which these recurrent clashes engendered, and there is a danger in drawing conclusions about the operation of the system from occasions when it may have been malfunctioning. At the same time, however, any account of the political system has to account for the prominence of specific individuals, and to remember the limits to our knowledge: Xenophon informs us in passing (*Hell.* 3.3.8) that the Spartans had a body called the Little Assembly, about which we know nothing else;⁸ there may have been other institutions which have completely vanished.

The approach of Andrewes to Sparta's political system is to privilege the narrative accounts of Thucydides and Xenophon, which appear to show the Assembly and Ephors in charge with the Gerousia in a much less prominent position (pp. 55–7); Andrewes explained the puzzle of Aristotle's analysis, which does not give the Assembly much significance, as a response to intellectual debates about Sparta rather than a depiction of the current, or a historical, reality. By contrast de Ste Croix accepts that Aristotle was reflecting the distribution of power during the long period of Spartan supremacy, and explains the prominence accorded by Aristotle to the Gerousia by identifying

its judicial powers, especially in the trial of kings, to supplement its probouleutic role, i.e. that of presenting business to the Assembly; the Ephors remain influential, but the Assembly is marginalised and a powerful king or the Gerousia can disregard the feelings of Spartan citizens. De Ste Croix's views have been criticised by David Lewis,⁹ who was predisposed to accept Andrewes' analysis, but his counter-arguments are not always directed at the core of the debate; some of Lewis' complaints can be directed against Andrewes just as much as de Ste Croix.¹⁰

Whatever balance of power one favours, it is clear that a determined king could make the system operate for himself: Agesilaus may be the best example of this, but this thesis is not based just on his exceptionally well-documented life since Cleomenes in the 490s or Pausanias briefly in 403 provide other instances; the traditional nature of Agesilaus' methods of domination has recently been stressed.¹¹ On the other hand such kings had to work hard to achieve their success, Cleomenes through soliciting the Delphic Oracle, Pausanias by winning over a majority of the Ephors, and Agesilaus by a programme of gifts and favours. Even the most powerful king could be challenged and, occasionally, cut down to size if his behaviour served to unite other elements in the system against him: Cleomenes was ultimately exiled (Hdt. 6.74.1).¹² The royal families were extremely wealthy, in peacetime the kings received significant social privileges and exercised religious duties, and in war they were normally the first choice of commander; the Ephors may have been intended to keep royal power in check, but the most significant restraint on any individual ruler was the presence in Sparta of the second king, who naturally provided a focus for alternative ideas and ambitions.¹³

¹ Cf. Cartledge, *Agesilaos*, Ch. 8.

² See Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 3.7, for discussion of the reluctance of Charmides (one of the Thirty Tyrants) to participate in the democracy.

³ See Cartledge, *Agesilaos*, 116–18.

⁴ E.g. Forrest, *Sparta*, 40–51; Cartledge, *Agesilaos*, 124–5 for a brief account.

⁵ For the development of Delphi in the Archaic period, see G. Forrest in *CAH* III.3, 305–20, and C. A. Morgan, *Athletes and Oracles: The Transformation of Olympia and Delphi in the Eighth Century B.C.*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

⁶ With regard to this rider there is a difficult and technical, but also thought-provoking, discussion by D. Ogden, 'Crooked Speech: The Genesis of the Spartan Rhetra', *JHS* 114, 1994, 85–102. Ogden suggests that the rider is more primitive than the main Rhetra in language and conception, which suggests that it antedated the Rhetra: on this theory Sparta was originally controlled by Homeric-style kings who dominated their council and people; the Council of Elders, Gerousia, then secured greater authority and co-operated with the kings in controlling the people (the situation in the rider); thereafter the Rhetra gave the citizen Assembly primary authority in the state, though its powers were still modified by the existence of the rider. This hypothesis is complex, but plausible.

⁷ Some (e.g. Cartledge, *Agesilaos*, 126) accept the attribution on the grounds that credence should be given to non-Lycurgan stories, but Hodkinson ('Development', 84–5) raises doubts about the alternative tradition. For thorough discussion of the ephors, see Richer, *Éphores*.

⁸ Nothing is known of its composition or status. It would appear to be larger than the Gerousia, but a more confidential body than the Assembly – perhaps it comprised former Ephors.

⁹ Lewis, *Sparta*, Ch. 2, esp. 36–44.

¹⁰ E.g. on the identification of strong kings through their ability to impose their will on the Ephors, which Andrewes, 'Government', 9, accepts just as much as de Ste Croix.

¹¹ Hodkinson, 'Society', 98.

¹² Pausanias, a much weaker ruler, was twice put on trial (Paus. 3.5.2, 6), and Agesilaus is said to have been fined by the Ephors on one occasion (Plut., *Ages.* 5.4); see Lewis, *Sparta*, 44–9 for a fuller list of problems encountered by kings.

¹³ On prerogatives and duties, see especially Herodotus 6.56–60; discussion in Osborne, *Greece*, 334–5; de Ste Croix, *Origins*, 138–47; Cartledge, *Agesilaos*, Ch. 7.

2 *The Government of Classical Sparta*[†]

A. ANDREWES

The constitutional machinery of the Spartan state is not perhaps the most interesting or important element in that strange society, but it has attracted much attention, not least from the eminent veteran of Spartan studies whom this volume honours,¹ and I need not too much apologize for introducing the subject again. The position which I want to discuss was put succinctly by Arnold Gomme in his comment on Thucydides, i, 18, 1 (*Hist. Comm. on Thucydides*, i (1945), 129): ‘The political constitution of Sparta ... except for the anomaly of the two kings was of a normal aristocratic type.’ That is surely nearer the mark than the opposite view which stresses the abnormalities. Nevertheless, the narratives of Thucydides and Xenophon suggest that this is not quite right, that Sparta had in some ways a more open constitution than most oligarchies, and if that is a fact it calls for comment.

The word ‘classical’ in my title may serve as notice that I am not here rejoining the long procession of those who have found a complete solution to the problems connected with the lawgiver Lycurgus. I propose to concentrate on the period when we can best see the Spartan constitution in action, and especially on the evidence of Xenophon,² who knew Sparta and scatters technical detail with some freedom. But I do not mean to restrict myself to the period between the Persian Wars and Alexander. The historic period begins for Sparta, as for other Greek states, at the point where Herodotos begins to give us credible detail about day-to-day affairs, and I shall refer where necessary to the late sixth century, and sometimes stray forward into the troubles at the end of the third.

A COUNCIL AND ASSEMBLY

The central part of the mechanism is the process by which the state made its decisions, to pass a law or declare war or accept a treaty, and other less spectacular matters. The procedure was probouleutic, the system familiar from Athens and elsewhere, in which public affairs are first discussed in a council, then put to the vote in an assembly. The practical convenience is obvious, that business should be digested by a smaller body before being presented to a mass meeting, but apart from this, to judge by the way ancient writers speak of it, the council’s *probouleusis* was also regarded as a valuable check on the wilder impulses of the assembly; and at Sparta, besides the familiar rule that the assembly might consider only what was brought before it from the council,

there was in theory the further check embodied in the Rider to the Great Rhetra (Plut., *Lyc.*, 6, 8) which, whatever the precise procedure envisaged in its brief and enigmatic formula, gave the council power to block an unsuitable resolution of the assembly. Even so, the assembly was sovereign in the sense that its consent was necessary before positive action could be taken.

For classical Greece the *gerousia* of Sparta was unusual in that its members held office for life, like those of the venerable Areopagus at Athens, and it attracted interest and respect from the outside world. Plato's language (*Laws*, 691d–692a) is careful and flowery: among the factors which saved the Spartan kings from the fate of their cousins in Argos and Messenia, he reckons first the providence of god which gave Sparta a double kingship, more moderate than single monarchy; then 'a human figure with some admixture of divine power' – that can only be Lycurgus – 'diluted their inherited head-strong force with the prudent power of old age, by giving the twenty-eight *gerontes* an equal vote with the kings on the most important matters'; and then a third saviour set up the ephorate. Plutarch (*Lyc.*, 5, 10–6, 1) put the *gerousia* at the head of Lycurgus' achievements, citing Plato and intensifying the rhetoric, and he treated the Great Rhetra as an oracle concerned primarily with the establishment of the *gerousia* – and that was no doubt a conventional opinion, not an isolated or eccentric view of Plutarch's own.

There is no general statement about the assembly,³ after the Rhetra and Tyrtaios' paraphrase, till we come to the second book of Aristotle's *Politics*, the section devoted to the Spartan, Cretan and Carthaginian constitutions, and there the assembly cuts a poor figure. Dealing with features common to Sparta and Crete, Aristotle remarks (1272a, 11) that the assembly has no power except to ratify the decisions of the *gerontes* or (in Crete) the *kosmoi*. Logically the power to ratify should include a power to refuse to ratify, but Aristotle's phrasing and the verb he uses [*sunepipsephisai* = literally 'join in assenting'] rather suggest that he thought the assembly was a mere rubber stamp. A still more difficult sentence devoted mainly to Carthage (1273a, 9) seems to say that there the people had the right of decision and might even speak against the proposals set before them, whereas in Sparta and Crete they were only allowed to listen [*diakousai*] to what the authorities had decided already. I would agree with Wade-Gery (*Essays in Greek History* (1958), 51–4) that there is something seriously wrong here; but also with Hammond (*JHS*, lxx, 1950, 46–7) that the first of the two passages cited above (1272a, 11) must be given its full weight. When Aristotle wrote this section he seems to have thought that the assembly was of no great account in Sparta. This is confirmed by a brief passage on the balance of the constitution, 1270b, 22: the kings are kept contented by their privileges, the upper class by the possibility of entering the *gerousia*, the *demos* by being eligible for the ephorate. If he had thought that the *demos* in its assembly played an important part in formulating policy, he could be expected to have reckoned that among the reasons why it was content.

All this is roughly what we might expect to find in an oligarchy notorious

for its discipline and its respect for age and authority: a strong council, few in numbers, and a weak assembly. And as M. I. Finley has recently put it (*The Ancient Greeks* (1963), 80): 'one may wonder how much independence of judgment was exercised by a body of men for whom strict military obedience was the paramount virtue.' But a familiar instance suggests that discipline in the field did not stifle criticism at home, that the Spartans were able to distinguish the roles of soldier and citizen: in 418, when King Agis made a very unpopular truce with Argos, Thucydides says that the army followed him home 'because of the law' (v, 60, 2), but the assembly was ready to inflict savage penalties on him as soon as it became clear that his truce was a failure (v, 63). We must look at the rest of the record.

Herodotos shows us the *gerousia* in action only once (v, 39–40), some time in the 540s, consulting with the ephors about the problem of King Anaxandridas' marriage. Anaxandridas was happily married to his niece, but had no children, so in time the ephors summoned him and advised him to put his wife away and marry another; 'and if you do this, you will please the Spartiates'. The King refused, having no fault to find with his wife, so ephors and *gerontes* consulted together and made a new proposition, that he should keep his wife but marry another as well, and this time the threat, though still politely expressed, becomes more definite: 'do not resist this proposal, for fear the Spartiates may take some harsh measure against you.' This time Anaxandridas accepted.

Once this story is read attentively, it is clear that no one has exercised any constitutional power at all or done anything but offer advice. The constitutional point is the nature of the sanction with which the King is threatened, not anything that the ephors may do, or ephors and *gerousia* together, but the action of 'the Spartiates': that is a way of saying 'the state of Sparta' (see p. 55 below), but in the context they must refer to action by someone other than themselves, and I think this means the assembly. If the King had persisted in his refusal, the *gerousia* would have had to put some proposal before the assembly – and in that sense the story might be held to illustrate the probouleutic duties of the *gerousia*, though here they were not brought into action.

For the fifth century, Diodoros, xi, 50 gives us a heated debate both in *gerousia* and assembly soon after the Persian Wars, on the question whether Sparta should fight Athens for the naval hegemony. His debate moves backwards and forwards between council and assembly in a confusing way,⁴ but here at least is a record of the *gerousia* engaged in what is supposed to be its main function, taking part in a decision of genuine importance. But in the whole text of Thucydides the word *gerousia* does not come up once, nor is the institution alluded to. Further, his record of the great debate in 432, whether to go to war with Athens, practically excludes the council from any serious share in the decision. The Spartans held 'their usual assembly' (i, 67, 3, cf. 87, 1),⁵ which was addressed both by their allies and by an Athenian delegation; then

all foreigners were removed while they debated among themselves (i, 79); and at the end a formal vote was taken (i, 87). Unless Thucydides has telescoped the story in a misleading manner,⁶ there is no room for discussion by the *gerousia* after the allies had been heard, and we have perhaps to imagine that the council left the issue to a free vote of the assembly, as the Athenian council sometimes did (e.g. *ATL*, ii, D3, 5; Tod, *GHI*, 114, 13 ff.). Much the same could be argued of other occasions when the assembly took a vote after hearing foreign ambassadors (e.g. Xen., *Hell.*, v, 2, 11; 20; 24), though on these other occasions we hear less detail of the procedure.

The *gerousia* comes into action once in Xenophon's narrative (iii, 3, 8), on the occasion of Kinadon's conspiracy in the first year of Agesilaos' reign. The conspiracy was reported to the ephors, who were told that its outbreak was imminent, and they believed the information. So, Xenophon says, 'they did not even summon what is called the little assembly',⁷ but collected the *gerontes* from wherever each one happened to be, and their joint decision was to send Kinadon out of town and arrest him quietly at Aulon. This was a manoeuvre which could not be discussed in any sort of assembly: the ephors, caught in an emergency whose extent they did not yet know, got what backing they could by calling the *gerousia* together, and that no doubt would have carried weight if their action had been questioned later. But the story does not illustrate formal procedure, though it shows that the *gerontes* were there and that they counted for something.

After that, except for the tears they shed in 367 (Xen., *Hell.*, vii, 1, 32), nothing more is heard of them for a century and a half, when the ephor Lysandros in 243 introduced the reforms planned by King Agis IV. According to Plutarch (*Agis*, 9, 1) the proceedings began in the *gerousia*, where opinion was divided: Lysandros then summoned an assembly, which was addressed by him and by both kings and was enthusiastic for Agis, but it is not said that a vote was taken; then (11, 1) we are back in the council ['who have the say in the matter of *probouleusis*'], and the proposals were rejected by a majority of one. As with Diodoros, the procedure is not clearly defined, in particular no attempt is made to explain how there came to be a meeting of the assembly between two meetings of the council: but since at the second session Plutarch expressly comments that the council's power was probouleutic it is likely that we are still at this preliminary stage, and that the meeting of the assembly was not a formal meeting voting on formal proposals.⁸ At all events, this is again the *gerousia* deliberating on an important matter of public policy, and its rejection of Agis' reforms was final in the sense that Lysandros had to resort to extra-constitutional means to get round it (*ibid.*, 12).

That is not much. For the revolutionary upheavals of the third century, Phylarchos' contemporary narrative provided Plutarch with some relevant constitutional detail. For the 470s, Diodoros no doubt owed his information to Ephoros, writing more than a century after the event; and even if the story were not authentic it would still show that the fourth century thought the

gerousia a suitable scene for debate on important issues of policy. But it is disconcerting, in view of what Plato and Aristotle say, to find that neither Thucydides nor Xenophon ever alludes to probouleutic discussion in the *gerousia*. In contrast the Athenian council does from time to time enter the narrative, e.g. Thuc., v, 45, 1; viii, 66, 1; Xen., *Hell.*, 1, 7, 3 ff. – though no theorist ascribes to this council any control of policy.⁹

The Spartan assembly is mentioned three times in Thucydides: apart from the debate in 432, he quotes in full a document of winter 418/7 which begins [‘The assembly of the Spartans decided to make an agreement with the Argives on the following terms’ ...] (v, 77, 1); and there is another meeting in winter 415/4, addressed by Corinthian and Syracusan envoys and by Alkibiades (vi, 88, 10). Xenophon in the *Hellenika* gives us no less than eight: (a) an assembly in 404 on the surrender of Athens, addressed by Corinthians and Thebans and others (ii, 2, 9); (b) the ephors and assembly in 403 listening to both sides in the Athenian quarrel and making their decision (ii, 4, 38); (c) ephors and assembly, probably in 402, issuing an ultimatum to Elis (iii, 2, 23); (d) ephors and assembly in 389 deciding to help the Achaians of Kalydon (iv, 6, 3); (e) in 383 the ephors bring the envoys of Akanthos and Apollonia before an assembly, which votes to send them help (v, 2, 11; 20); (f) Leontiades of Thebes addressing an assembly in 382 (v, 2, 33); (g) the assembly in spring 371 to make peace with Athens (vi, 3, 3); (h) the assembly in summer 371 which took the fatal decision that King Kleombrotos should march against the Thebans (vi, 4, 3). That makes eleven occasions in all between 432 and 371, most of them of major importance, several on which it is clear that there was considerable debate in the assembly.

Of course, on the vast majority of occasions when the Spartan state took action, our historians do not specify the authority which ordered the action but simply say that ‘the Spartans’ said or did whatever it was. But where the authority is specified, we have these eleven decisions of the assembly, and no record of any comparable decision taken by the *gerousia* within the same period. I therefore assume that in a fair number of cases, where this unspecific ‘the Spartans’ occurs, the assembly was the forum where the formal decision was made.

The narrative is thus in irremediable conflict with Aristotle, which is puzzling and embarrassing; but we cannot try to remodel the narrative for the sake of Aristotle. Wade-Gery rightly stressed that the conflict is not merely with Thucydides and Xenophon, but that the archaic settlement embodied in the Great Rhetra and paraphrased in some lines of Tyrtaios exhibits a procedure quite different from that suggested in the *Politics*. That is the more remarkable in that Aristotle clearly at some time studied the Rhetra: Plutarch quotes him for the exegesis of some passages (*Lyc.*, 5, 12; 6, 4 = *Arist.*, fr. 537, 536 Rose), and I see no reason to question the widely held view that Plutarch derived his text of the Rhetra from Aristotle’s *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*. We seem thus to be driven to say that Aristotle wrote the

relevant chapter of the *Politics* before he had studied the *Rhetra*, and indeed without having seriously considered the historical record of the first half of the fourth century. That, I must again emphasize, is disquieting, but I see no way round the conclusion: *pol.*, ii is in general about the theories of Aristotle's predecessors, and it is perhaps not beyond belief that these older sections of the work were concerned more with the merits of current theory about Sparta, especially the theories that Aristotle encountered in Athens, than with research into the facts.¹⁰

But our question here is not about the way in which Aristotle arrived at his opinions. The fact seems to be that the major decisions of Spartan policy were taken in full assembly, and that the council played a relatively inconspicuous part. What is involved may be clearer if we consider the numbers. Aristotle had been told, though he was not sure whether to believe it, that Sparta had once had 10,000 citizens (*pol.*, ii, 1270a, 36–8). Herodotos numbers 5000 soldiers in the field at Plataea in 479 (ix, 28, 2), and makes Demaratos tell Xerxes that Sparta was a city of 8000 men in all (vii, 234, 2). By the middle of the fourth century there had certainly been a steep decline,¹¹ but it is difficult to measure the pace of it since our authorities, when they give us army numbers at all, do not tell us the proportions of Spartiates and *perioikoi* in the army. We have to do the best we can with Thucydides' figures for the prisoners at Sphakteria in 425 (iv, 38, 5),¹² and Xenophon's for the army at Leuktra in 371 (vi, 4, 15).¹³ That is a small foundation, but it would be reasonable to guess that in the last quarter of the fifth century the voting strength of the Spartan assembly was not less than 3000.

For a contemporary contrast, there is the opinion of the Athenian oligarchs of 411 that to extend the franchise to 5000 would be outright democracy (Thuc., viii, 92, 11); and the more dubious assertion which Thucydides ascribes to them, that in wartime at least the democratic assembly of Athens never mustered as many as 5000 (viii, 72, 1). The largest meeting envisaged under the federal constitution of the Boiotian League was a joint meeting of the four councils, 660 in all (*Hell. Oxy.*, 16 (11), 4); for other oligarchic states we have in effect no figures at all. Sparta's decisions, however, were taken in an assembly large enough to suffer those mass emotions which are thought to have been so disastrous at Athens. It is conceivable that in Thucydides' time a well-attended Spartan assembly might have been more numerous than an ill-attended assembly at Athens. Against this background we can more readily understand the role given by Thucydides to a highly emotional speech by the ephor Sthenelaidas in 432 (i, 86).

That is not of course the last word about the manner in which public business was conducted at Sparta, and I am certainly not maintaining that the situation which we find at Sparta was straight forwardly comparable with that of Athens. But before I pursue that further, we ought to look at another question, the share which the ephors may have had in determining the policy of the state.

The ephorate has exercised a powerful fascination over ancient and modern writers alike, and the latter sometimes attribute to it a continuous corporate policy and make it responsible for most of what happened in Sparta, especially in the sphere of foreign affairs. Yet the ephors changed annually, and were elected from and by the whole body of citizens: it is quite certain that the policy of one year's board might be the opposite of its predecessors' policy, and that the board of any one year might be far from unanimous. Much may be allowed to continuity of tradition, but on the practical questions of the day the ephors will have changed their policy at least as often as the electorate which appointed them.

The relations between ephors and kings are probably quite irrelevant to my problem, but they have been made to play so large a part in the interpretation of the history of Sparta in the late sixth century that I must take a little notice of them. I have dealt already with the earliest occasion on which we hear any detail about action by the ephors, the question about Anaxandridas' marriage, and I repeat that in that case the ephors exercised no special constitutional powers at all.¹⁴ The reign of Anaxandridas' son Kleomenes I has often been treated as a continuous struggle for power between King and ephors, especially since Dickins's essay, *JHS*, xxxii, 1912, 26–32. Dickins went so far as to maintain (p. 30) that the humiliating fiasco of the Peloponnesian army at Eleusis in 506, when the Corinthians mutinied and the Spartan king Demaratos supported them, was deliberately contrived by the ephors to thwart their enemy Kleomenes; and if the ephors were prepared to inflict a wound so severe as that on the reputation of their city the internal political quarrel must have been grave indeed.

But if we look to the narrative, we find that the ephors are mentioned only twice during the entire reign. Once was near the beginning, probably in 517, when Kleomenes advised the ephors to expel Maiandrios of Samos from the Peloponnese, and they accepted his advice (*Hdt.*, iii, 148, 2). The other was after Kleomenes' victory over Argos at Sepeia, in 494 or very soon after, when his enemies brought him before the ephors on the charge that he might have taken the city of Argos but had been bribed not to do so; and this time, near the end of the reign when his personal influence was waning, the ephors may have been so far hostile that they allowed the matter to be brought to trial, though in the event Kleomenes was acquitted easily (*Hdt.*, vi, 82).¹⁵

In between we hear no word of the ephors, and it is agreed that in this middle period of his reign Kleomenes exercised a preponderant personal influence over Sparta's foreign policy, so great that when Aristagoras of Miletos came in 499 to ask Sparta's help in the Ionic Revolt Herodotos describes only his interview with the King and says nothing of any formal proceedings before any other body (v, 49–51; 55). If Kleomenes' personal ascendancy was as great as that, one would expect it to have a comparable

effect in internal politics, and more particularly on the election of ephors. That adequately explains everything in Herodotos' narrative. We hear nothing of the ephors through most of the reign because they were the King's men anyway. It is precisely in the reigns of strong kings that we should expect not to hear of conflict between kings and ephors.¹⁶

So again with King Agesilaos in the first forty years of the fourth century, whom Xenophon exhibits as exercising a comparable influence in foreign policy. It is he who tells the Thebans that they cannot swear to the King's Peace in 387/6 on behalf of all the cities of Boiotia, and threatens the Argives with war unless they remove their garrison from Corinth (*Hell.*, v, 1, 32-4); and later we find him putting over his personal policy with regard to Phleious (v, 3, 23-5), and again telling the Thebans that they cannot swear to the peace of spring 371 for the Boiotian cities (vi, 3, 19). But Xenophon displays the mechanism as Herodotos did not: in 387 Agesilaos 'persuaded the ephors' to let him take out an army against Thebes, and later he 'sent to his friends' in Sparta to get the settlement with Phleious entrusted to him. Kleomenes will have used the regular machinery of the state in the same way.

Plutarch in his life of Agesilaos provides the only general statement known to me, that there was a continuing inherited jealousy between kings and ephors (*Ages.*, 4, 4-5), and this is no doubt true up to a point – I only wish to deny that this quarrel always overrode every other consideration. Agesilaos, he says, pursued tactics different from those of other kings and went out of his way to show deference to the ephors, running (not walking) when they summoned him, getting up from his throne when they approached. That indeed will have oiled the wheels of the machinery, but Plutarch makes it plain nevertheless that Agesilaos' strength depended not on this diplomatic handling of the ephors but on the support he was able to build up among the citizens at large;¹⁷ and the remaining evidence on his career shows how much his power rested on his personal performance, how little it depended on his constitutional position except to the extent that he could exploit this position to increase his personal popularity.

Struggle between monarchy and ephorate is not a general key to Spartan history, and it is no part of my problem. Nor need we here regard the ephors' right to arrest even the king (which so impressed Thucydides: i, 131, 2), the other things they might do in an emergency, and what might be summed up as their police powers. They were the executive, the only constitutional body which was, so to speak, in permanent session, and when a drastic initiative was needed only they were in a position to take it. The issue here is about what they might do in the ordinary way of their duties, to affect as well as merely to implement the decisions of the state. It is not enough to speak vaguely of the ephors exercising a general supervision over state and constitution: we must concentrate on particular spheres of duty and precise actions.

A THE CALL-UP OF THE ARMY

It can fairly be deduced from Thucydides' description of the proceedings in 432, and from a number of instances in Xenophon, that the decision to embark on war was normally taken by a vote of the assembly; though one cannot feel so sure that individual expeditions during a war were regularly authorized by a formal vote. But the call-up of the army was the business of the ephors; and they had the further responsibility, as Xenophon says explicitly in his *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* (11, 2), of deciding the number of age-groups to be called out; that is, they decided the precise size of army to be sent out on any particular campaign.¹⁸

This division of responsibility between assembly and ephors is to a fair extent reflected in Xenophon's narrative, but he has his limitations as a witness. As has been said, he is free with the kind of detail that is needed for this enquiry; but he is not a pedantically accurate writer, rather an impressionist with a singular gift for vivid description, and even where one is reasonably confident that the general outline is correct one cannot press the implications of a particular phrase as one might feel justified in doing with Thucydides. The only safe method, at any rate in the preliminary stages, is to prefer the precise phrase to the vague, the fuller description to the more summary.

Thus Xenophon is addicted to the phrase [*phrouran phainein*, 'to proclaim a levy'], for the call-up of the army, a Spartan technicality found in no other writer. Eight times he uses it with the ephors as subject (*Hell.*, iii, 2, 23; 25; 5, 6; iv, 2, 9; v, 3, 13; 4, 47; vi, 4, 17; 5, 10), six times of the Spartans at large (iv, 7, 2; v, 1, 36; 2, 3; 4, 13; 4, 35; 4, 59), once of Agesilaos individually (iv, 7, 1). I take it here that the more frequent and detailed statement is correct, that the ephors were the authority that called the army out, and that the procedure was not different when the Spartans are more vaguely the subject; and that in the exceptional case where Agesilaos is the subject we should understand that he persuaded the proper authorities to take action.

But mere military necessity would sometimes call for speed and secrecy, and then the executive had to take responsibility: the same might happen in Athens, where in general the assembly was in much more effective control, but still Hippokrates in 424 was able to order out a levy suddenly and without notice for his march to Delion (Thuc., iv, 90, 1).¹⁹ So at Sparta there is a curious occasion in 419 when Agis led out the full Spartan levy to the border, and Thucydides says (v, 54, 1) that no one knew where they were supposed to be going: here the assembly clearly had not been consulted, and the call-up and the appointment of Agis as commander must have been done by the ephors on their own, or at most ephors and *gerousia*.

The instance which most clearly illustrates the possibilities is in 403, the

course of Sparta's dealings with Athens during the democratic counter-revolution against the Thirty. Lysander had, as Xenophon puts it, 'contrived' [*sunephraxen*] to get himself sent to Athens with some troops: that might mean anything, even that Lysander went formally to the assembly. Next, King Pausanias persuaded three of the ephors – that is, a majority – to let him take a further force of Spartans and allies to Athens, where he worked for a solution diametrically opposed to the one favoured by Lysander (ii, 4, 28–9). The end of the matter was that both parties to the Athenian quarrel sent envoys to Sparta, where ephors and assembly heard them and gave their answer (ii, 4, 38), so eventually the rights of the assembly were respected; and the original action of the ephors was justified in the sense that the assembly upheld them against Lysander, and Pausanias was acquitted when he came home and his opponents brought him to trial (Paus., iii, 5, 2). But the ephors' first action, taken by a bare majority, gave the whole business a decisive twist, for the parties were evidently very evenly balanced at Sparta, and one cannot feel confident that the outcome would have been the same if Lysander had been left a free hand at Athens. He was indeed carrying out with entire success the task on which he had set out, so that the action of the ephors in sending out reinforcements to thwart him seems all the more arbitrary. The possibility remains that spontaneous intervention by the ephors may have had an important effect on the course of events more often than we have been told; but there still remain the fairly numerous instances where the major decisions were taken by the assembly.

B APPOINTMENT OF COMMANDER

In the vast majority of cases Xenophon merely tells us that the Spartans sent out an army under the command of a king, or still more vaguely that the king led an army out, without saying how one king rather than the other was appointed to the command in question. Once or twice, after his phrase about the ephors calling up the army, he goes on with words which, taken literally, would mean that they also decided who was to lead it;²⁰ that, in Xenophon, could be strictly true, or could be mere carelessness of expression. But three or four times he uses a fuller formula, saying that the ephors called the army up and 'the city' appointed its commander;²¹ 'city' as opposed to ephors must mean some wider body, presumably the full assembly. In common with most historians, I take it that the fuller description is the more correct, and that this procedure by which the assembly determined which king was to command can be traced right back to 510, when Herodotos (v, 64, 1) tells us that the Spartans decided to send a larger expedition against Athens and appointed Kleomenes to lead it.

C ORDERS TO COMMANDERS IN THE FIELD

During the Spartan campaigns in Asia Minor in the first years of the fourth century, Xenophon reports that the ephors ordered first Thibron (*Hell.*, iii, 1, 7) and later Derkyllidas (iii, 2, 12) to leave what they were doing in the north and transfer the war south to Caria; and there are many other comparable instances. Wherever these orders actually originated, they would be dispatched by the ephors, and I see no way of telling whether they sent such orders on their own initiative, or in execution of some resolution of some other body. The most we can do here is to note that the ephors might have influenced the course of a war through detailed instructions like these.

2 Foreign envoys

Such envoys to Sparta were certainly brought before the ephors in the first instance. There must always be some authority charged with this duty, as the council was at Athens, and that authority will be in a position to exercise some degree of control. They may for instance reject the embassy altogether, as the ephors sent back the first embassy from Athens during the siege of 405/4, on the ground that it offered unacceptable terms (*Xen., Hell.*, ii, 2, 13); and I do not know how we can tell whether that was the ephors' own decision, or depended on conditions laid down in advance by some other body. On one occasion, probably in 383, Xenophon describes how exiles from Phleious came to Sparta, and says that the ephors decided that their case must be taken up and themselves sent an ultimatum to Phleious (v, 2, 9); and there are a few comparable instances where the ephors seem to act directly in answer to foreign requests for help.²² Given Xenophon's manner of narration one cannot feel quite sure on these occasions how far the ephors went without consulting the assembly; but even if they did not take the final decision themselves one can easily imagine that much of a foreign embassy's business might in effect be done in private preliminary conversation with the ephors. But proceedings which are more fully described include the hearing of embassies by the assembly, as with Akanthos in 383 (v, 2, 11–24) or Athens in spring 371 (vi, 3, 3–18), and in these cases Xenophon clearly thought that the speeches of the envoys and the assembly's reaction to them were decisive. The ephors might sometimes encroach on the assembly's rights, but those rights were not abrogated.

3 Presidency of the assembly

Thucydides' narrative for 432 (i, 87, 1–2) makes it clear that the ephor Sthenelaidas presided over the crucial meeting of the assembly, and indeed determined its method of voting. We hear from time to time of the ephors consulting with the *gerousia*, and it is likely enough that they regularly attended its meetings; for all we know, they may even have presided over the

gerousia too. Democratic Athens was so nervous of the power which a permanent chairman might acquire that it devised elaborate systems of rotation among sub-committees of the council, accepting the risk which that entailed, that an important meeting of council or assembly might fall into the hands of an inexperienced or incompetent chairman. Sparta avoided that danger, but if the same powerful magistrates presided over the assembly throughout their year of office they might indeed exercise a considerable influence over the assembly's decisions. That perhaps accounts for the fact that on three of the occasions when Xenophon mentions the assembly he describes the decision as having been taken 'by the ephors and assembly' (ii, 4, 38; iii, 2, 23; iv, 6, 3); or even for the fact that sometimes he ignores the assembly altogether and speaks only of action by the ephors.

The general impression is clear enough. In the course of their ordinary duties the ephors were more ready to take the initiative, less afraid of offending their assembly, than the magistrates of a democratic state could afford to be. But formally speaking the large issues were for the assembly, and in the main they were decided there. The case of Pausanias in 403 illustrates both the extent to which independent action licensed by the ephors might affect the course of events, and also the necessity for matters of real moment to be referred in the end to the assembly. There is no record of any clash between ephors and assembly: we know of several trials of kings, but till the troubles of the third century we do not hear of an ephor being brought to trial for his past actions. Elected from the whole body of the citizens, they generally reflected the feelings of the electors, and evidently they understood how much independent action the assembly would tolerate.

When Xenophon ascribes decisions to 'the ephors and assembly', that is probably not expressed in the correct constitutional formula, but I am ready to believe that Xenophon has grasped the spirit of the procedure correctly, and that as a matter of fact the decisions of the state were often effectively the joint work of ephors and assembly. But it seems that he felt no temptation to describe such decisions as the joint work of council and assembly, and that brings us back to the original question, the prominence of the assembly in the narrative and the inconspicuousness of the *gerousia*.

C CONCLUSION

The reasons for that must be sought, in the first place, in the twilight of a remoter past. Whenever it was that the citizens of Sparta decided to call themselves the 'Equals' [*Homoioi*], and to do what they could to obliterate the overt signs of social and economic inequality, that decision had a political as well as a social side; and the political aspect of it is the Great Rhetra, which under certain safeguards assigned final decision to the *demos*. The mere size of the Spartan aristocracy was a major factor in determining the result. They

were of course a small minority in comparison with the subject population of *perioikoi* and helots whom they held down, but equally, since the conquest of Messenia, they possessed an unusually large territory for a Greek city, enough to support a privileged class in numbers far in excess of the oligarchic norm. Any meeting to which the whole of this privileged class had access was bound to be on the scale of an assembly rather than a council.²³

The ordinary style of oligarchic government could only have been introduced at Sparta by cutting down heavily the number of those who were entitled to vote. But there we have to allow something for the impetus of the reform which originally produced the Rhetra. The habit of free discussion in open assembly had been established,²⁴ and the form of established institutions will surely have some influence on the later development of the state. Most important of all was the assertion of equality. It was of course a pretence covering very real inequalities in wealth and social standing, but while the pretence was maintained it would have been hard to justify the exclusion from politics of any section of the Equals. In the aftermath of the Peloponnesian War the pretence wore thinner, and before long it was broken altogether; and that meant, in a generation or two, the development of a very different Sparta, much nearer normal oligarchy.

The modest record of the *gerousia* in this context may prompt some more general question about the probouleutic system in Greece. At whatever date the Rhetra was adopted in Sparta, it was surely then an innovation to hand over to so large a body, some substantial number of thousands, a serious share in the direction of the state. So it was natural to include in the bargain safeguards against irresponsible action by the *demos*, even the severe safeguard of the Rider which empowered the *gerousia* to set aside a crooked decision of the people. There is no sign that this last safeguard was ever employed, and for all we know the Rider may have been a dead letter from the start. But the rule that measures must first be considered by the *gerousia* remained in force and still operated in 243, and may have been some restraint: in the 470s, the decision not to fight Athens seems to have been taken primarily in the *gerousia*, though Diodoros also speaks of Hetoimaridas convincing the *demos*; certainly the reforms of 243 were voted down in the *gerousia*. But, once more, the record does not suggest that the *gerousia* played any large role in these matters.

For Athens, and only for Athens, we have more detail. The people were in an active revolutionary mood when Solon called them together in 594, and having once gone into action they might act again.²⁵ According to Plutarch (*Sol.*, 19, 1) it was entirely for fear of what the people might do that Solon instituted his new council and laid it down that the assembly might consider only the measures put before it by this council, one of the two anchors of his ship of state.²⁶ In fact neither Solon's Four Hundred²⁷ nor their successors the Kleisthenic Five Hundred, are on record as ever having prevented the assembly from doing anything that it wanted to do, though the procedural point, that

measures must go through the council first, was still observed in the fourth century. To the extent that Solon and the Spartan reformers were trying to curtail the dangerous impulses of an emergent *demos*, they failed, and the *demos* emerged in disregard of the safeguard.

Their councils, however, performed other most useful functions. It was no doubt always valuable, especially in the greater complexity of Athenian public business, that issues should be focused for the assembly by previous discussion in the council. The most important contribution of the Five Hundred to the public life of classical Athens was its general oversight of an administration more extensive and complicated than Solon could ever have dreamed. The *gerousia* was the highest lawcourt in Sparta, the only court that could inflict the graver penalties of death or exile or loss of civil rights; and this is the only aspect of the *gerousia* which Aristotle considers in the *Politics*. The high standing of the *gerontes* is quite compatible with comparative passivity in relation to the assembly.

Isokrates, in his old age, in the *Panathenaicus* (12, 78), remarked that the Spartiates, whatever they might have done to their *perioikoi*, 'had set up among themselves that equality before the law and that democracy which a state should have if it is going to live for ever in harmony'. To describe the internal arrangements of Spartan politics as democratic is conscious paradox, but refreshing compared with standard cant about aristocracy. It is meaningful, however, only in relation to the constitutional forms I have been discussing, and I repeat that I am not trying to maintain that Sparta was just like Athens. The factors which governed the voting in the Spartan assembly were surely very different from those that governed the Pnyx at Athens.

Political quarrels could be fierce enough at Sparta: examples are the rivalry (*hamilla*) in 412 about co-operation with the Persian satraps, one of the rare moments when Thucydides was prepared to let us look below the surface (viii, 6, 2; 12); the quarrel of Lysander and Pausanias (above, pp. 61–2); the rivalry between Agesilaos and Agesipolis (Xen., *Hell.*, v, 3, 20), or later Agesilaos and Kleombrotos (e.g., v, 4, 25); the question whether Phoibidas should be punished in 382 (v, 2, 32) and, still more, Sphodrias in 378 (v, 4, 22–33). Discussion and negotiation beforehand might be more important than the formal proceedings, and very great weight attached to personal influence, especially that of an active king: for both, Xenophon's account of the Sphodrias affair gives us a good idea what went on. But constitutional forms, if they are not the whole story, are not merely irrelevant, for they meant that when it was necessary to take a decision the question erupted in open assembly, and Xenophon makes it clear that in the cases of both Phoibidas and Sphodrias the general opinion of the city was a serious factor – and that could not be said of every oligarchy.

As I indicated at the start, I do not want to rate the constitutional machinery too high. Xenophon's small treatise, whose title we render as *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*,²⁸ contains no word about the mechanisms I have tried to analyse, at most a few sentences on Spartan respect for established authority

(ch. 8, mostly on the ephors). He attributed the Spartans' extraordinary success in imposing their will upon the Greek world to their habits of life, their [*epitedeumata*] (1, 1) or what we should call their social institutions; and he was surely in the right.

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[†] First published in E. Badian (ed.), *Ancient Society and Institutions: Studies Presented to Victor Ehrenberg on his 75th Birthday*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1966, 1–20; reprinted by permission of the publisher.

¹ Though it was not his first essay on the subject, I should like to mention with special gratitude *Neugründer des Staates* (1925); and the survey in RE, s.v. Sparta, IIIA, 2 (1929), 1373–1453. My subject is treated incidentally in many works on Sparta, though most are concerned primarily with the archaic period: but Busolt-Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde*, ii (1926), 671–94 deals comprehensively and in depth with the classical apparatus of government; and Michell, *Sparta* (1952), ch. iv–v, raises most of the important problems.

A version of this essay was given as a lecture to the Hellenic Society on July 1st, 1965. The criticisms of H. T. Wade-Gery, M. I. Finley, W. G. Forrest and G. E. M. de Ste Croix have materially improved it since, but they bear no responsibility for the views eventually expressed.

² All references to Xenophon in the following notes are to the *Hellenica* unless otherwise stated.

³ I use throughout the neutral term 'assembly', though believing that its Spartan name was *ekklesia*. For a protest against the view that its name was *apella*, and for Xenophon's occasional use of the term *ekkletoi*, see Wade-Gery, *Essays in Greek History* (1958), 44–7, 190 with n. 3.

⁴ Cf. Plutarch's description of the procedure in 2.43, discussed pp. 53–4 and n. 8.

⁵ I do not think that anything is to be gained by taking the ['gathering' (*xullogos*)] which the allies addressed as something different from the [*ekklesia*] in which the Spartans eventually voted: see Gomme on i, 67, 3; ii, 22, 1.

⁶ We might suppose that a meeting of the *gerousia* is concealed in i, 79; or that the Corinthians had already made a similar speech to the *gerousia* before the meeting of i, 67, 3 begins. Neither seems the least plausible.

⁷ The [little assembly (*mikra ekklesia*)] is mentioned nowhere else, but this text is sufficient guarantee that there was such an institution, and it is disquieting that we should know nothing at all about it. But equally, the fact that it makes no other appearance in the narrative suggests that it played no large part in normal circumstances.

⁸ Mr Forrest suggests to me that it may have been regular Spartan practice to discuss a project in the assembly, without any kind of vote, before the *gerousia* made up its mind and produced a formal resolution; and he will develop this suggestion elsewhere in print. If that is right, these passages of Plutarch and Diodoros present no problem. Alternatively, it has been suggested that the procedure of 2.43 gives us a unique instance of the exercise by the *gerousia* of the blocking power given to it by the Rider to the Rhetra, but that should produce a very different comment from Plutarch's reference here to *probouleusis*.

⁹ I would not attach much weight to these appearances of the Athenian council in the narrative, for the proceedings at Athens were far more open, and there is far more narrative altogether about what went on at Athens. But it remains true that according to the theorists the *gerousia* ought to be far more important for Spartan policy than the Five Hundred for Athenian policy.

10 We may fairly take note of *pol.*, 1270a, 19–21 on the Spartan system of land tenure, which attributes to the archaic lawgiver the position established by the ephor Epitadeus (Plut., *Agis*, 5, 3), probably early in the fourth century; whereas Herakleides (Arist., fr. 611 Rose) 12 and [Plut.] *inst. Lac.*, 22 (= *mor.* 238e) suggest that Aristotle knew more about the system when he came to write the *Lac. pol.* More generally, the passage on Solon in this same book (1273b, 35–1274a, 21) is mainly a critique of opinions held by theorists about Solon, with a minimum of reference to the facts; though it is true that the Spartan section has much more factual detail and a few references to very recent history (1269b, 37; 1270b, 11). It could also be argued that the question of the relations between council and assembly does not deeply engage his attention here: the discussion of the *gerousia* (1270b, 35–1271a, 18) is concerned only with its judicial function, and the assembly is not mentioned at all in the section which deals directly with Sparta.

On the other hand, there is no comfort in arguing that Aristotle's portrait is of Sparta after Leuktra, and that the role of the assembly might have declined since 371, for he ought to have taken account of the first quarter of the century, and elsewhere he freely uses examples from before 371. I am ready to believe that Ephoros' account of that period was less realistic than Xenophon's, if that is relevant.

11 Aristotle's [comment that 'there were not even one thousand in total'] (1270a, 30–31) appears to refer to the time of Leuktra, and if so it is a slight underestimate: see n. 13.

12 420 hoplites crossed to the island, of whom 292 survived, about 120 of them Spartiates: the proportions among the survivors are not necessarily representative (cf. however 40, 2), but this suggests that more than a third of the original detachment was Spartiate; and if that proportion could be applied to the army as a whole we should be on slightly firmer ground. Unfortunately Thucydides' figures for five-sixths of the total army at Mantinea in 418 are disputed (v, 64, 3; 68, 3), but I believe, with Wade-Gery (*Essays*, 72) and Toynbee, that we should double his total, giving just over 6000, the figure which Xenophon (iv, 2, 16) gives for the army called out in 394. If the Pylos proportion applies, that would mean over 2400 Spartiates altogether of military age, and the men over 60 would bring the citizen total to somewhere around 3000.

13 There were altogether 700 Spartiates present, of whom 400 were killed; four out of the six *morai* fought, with a call-up to the age of 55 (vi, 4, 17). 300 belong to the King's guard, leaving it a little uncertain how we should distribute the remaining 400 (Wade-Gery, *op. cit.*, 84, takes the guard as wholly separate and allots 100 to each *mora*, but if the guard were a component of one *mora* this would need slight adjustment). We have to add the Spartiate component of the age-group 55–60, not called up till after the battle, and the total of Spartiates of military age will thus at the lowest be over rather than under 1000, and the total of citizens decidedly over (cf. n. 11). At best this means a very sharp decline between 418 (or 394) and 371, more than one could attribute merely to war casualties in the period of empire. But, unless we reject Herodotos' figures, the decline between 479 and 418 is equally striking and equally hard to explain in satisfactory terms. (It should need no saying that the calculations in this and the previous note are exceedingly tenuous; but we have no other material available.)

14 Glotz and Cohen offer no detailed justification for their remarkable assertion in *Histoire grecque*, i (1925), 373, 'en faisant confier aux éphores, suppôts de la noblesse, le droit de déposer les rois, il (sc. Chilon) mit le sceau à l'oeuvre de l'aristocratie' ['by entrusting the right to depose kings to the ephors, the supporters of the nobility, he (Chilon) put the finishing touch to the aristocrats' actions']. Can they have had this incident in mind?

The punctuation (see now Long's Oxford text) and interpretation of Diog. Laert., i, 68 were conclusively established in 1902 by Jacoby, *Apollodors Chronik*, 183 ff., as was acknowledged against the interest of his own thesis by Ehrenberg, *Neugründer*, 47, and very clearly set out on p. 127, n. 25. There is no justification here for the still common opinion that Chilon enlarged the powers of the ephorate in the middle of the sixth century.

15 Kleomenes' defence, which puzzled Herodotos, was accepted by 'the Spartiates', and ['he escaped the prosecution by a large margin']; and, as most commentators have recognized, that does not sound like a hearing before only the five ephors. So we should probably understand that the case was brought before the assembly.

16 Large parts of any opinion I hold about Kleomenes derive from unpublished lectures of Wade-Gery. In the present case it is impossible to disentangle the debt in detail, and I can only make general acknowledgment.

17 This culminates in the implausible story (5, 4) that the ephors, fearing his power, fined him ['because he acquired as his own the citizens who should have been held in common']. At 2, 6 Theophrastos is cited for the story that the ephors fined his father Archidamos for marrying too short a wife: ['For, they said, she will produce kinglets for us, not kings']. These two stories are solemnly cited in handbooks as evidence for the ephors' power to inflict summary fines even on a king (e.g., Busolt-Swoboda, ii, 690), but there is no respectable evidence and no inherent probability.

¹⁸ The assembly might take this decision itself, e.g., Xen., v, 20.

¹⁹ The lack of notice will account for the fact that a levy ['of the whole people'] produced only some 7000 men (iv, 94, 1; 93, 3).

²⁰ (a) iii, 5, 6 (395), following 'the city's' decision, ['The ephors ordered a mobilization, while sending Lysander to Phocis'], but the commander of the regular army comes in a separate sentence, ['Pausanias, who was to be in command'], with no clear indication who appointed him; (b) v, 4, 14 (winter 379/8), ['The ephors ... sent out Cleombrotus'], but this time it was 'the Spartans' who called out the army, and it is not clear whom Agesilaos was addressing when he refused the command (on the previous occasion, v, 2, 3, it was 'the city'); (c) v, 4, 47 (spring 377). The ephors ['ordered a mobilisation ... and, as previously, asked Agesilaos to take command'], but the request the year before came from 'the Spartans', v, 4, 35. None of this is clear or unambiguous. For Pausanias in 403 (ii, 4, 29), see above: v, 1, 33 is a similar case, and perhaps iv, 8, 32.

²¹ Clear at iv, 2, 9; vi, 4, 17; 5, 10: less clearly v, 2, 3; 4, 35 (see n. 20).

²² iii, 1, 1, where the ephors heard the envoys from Cyrus, and they sent orders to the nauarch Samios to help him; but Xenophon has left us very much in the dark about the antecedents of this decision – for instance, he does not even tell us where Samios was or what he was supposed to be doing before he received the order (*anab.*, i, 4, 2 is no help).

²³ For the numbers involved see above, pp. 56–7.

²⁴ In the text I have not raised the question whether Spartiates other than *gerontes* and ephors were permitted to speak in the assembly. The belief that they were excluded rests on the two passages from Aristotle's *Politics* discussed above, pp. 51, 55–6, and I do not think these are good evidence. Plutarch, *Lyc.*, 6, 7, and the Rider to the Rhetra itself, are inexplicable unless amendments from the body of the assembly were allowed. For a fair statement of the rest of the evidence, see Wade-Gery, *Essays*, 65 (the last paragraph of his Appendix I); but I do not suppose that the moral tale in Aischines, i, 180 (cf. Plut., *mor.*, 801c) goes back to a real occasion.

²⁵ It makes no great difference to this argument whether the lower classes were formally entitled to vote in the assembly before his time (which seems to me the more probable), or obtained this privilege only from Solon.

²⁶ Plut., *Sol.*, 19, 1–2, where the metaphor of the anchor is attributed to Solon himself, and certainly implies restraint.

²⁷ Denying that Solon ever created such a council, C. Hignett, *History of the Athenian Constitution* (1952.), 96, remarked that 'if Solon created a new council, it must have been one of the most futile constitutional experiments recorded in history'. That is ferociously expressed – there are many futile experiments on record and we need not award a special prize to Solon – but no believer in Solon's new council need shrink from admitting that it was ineffective as a constitutional safeguard.

²⁸ I do not mean to suggest that Xenophon himself tried to deceive us about the content of his pamphlet.

3 *Trials at Sparta*[†]

G. E. M. DE STE CROIX

Too many scholars have overlooked the great political importance, even in the field of foreign affairs, of one side of the Gerousia's activities: its control of jurisdiction in the most serious criminal cases.

An essential part of the political process in Greek cities (and here Sparta is for once no exception) was the 'political trial', in the broadest sense: accusation before a duly constituted legal tribunal of a public figure, either openly for some act alleged to have been committed 'not in the best interests of the State',¹ or in a disguised form, as when in 427 the pro-Athenian Corcyraean Peithias, after being prosecuted and acquitted on a charge of bringing Corcyra into subjection to Athens, got his own back on five of his accusers by successfully prosecuting them for cutting stakes on sacred ground (Thuc. III 70.3–4), the charge of impiety being a mere cover for a 'political' accusation.² Such trials might arise out of general political disagreement or mere personal enmity.

At Athens political trials in this sense were very frequent, especially in the fourth century, when (as is well known) the use of the *graphē paranomōn* [indictment on grounds of illegal behaviour] became very common, and any decision of the Assembly that aroused opposition might, by this procedure, be in effect reviewed by a court. Indeed, one might go so far as to say that the Athenian democracy was just as dependent upon the composition of its law courts, membership of which was available to all citizens over the age of thirty, as upon the fact that all citizens could attend the Assembly. Aristotle (*Ath. Pol.* 9.1) believed that the Athenian demos, when it acquired control of the courts (under Solon's legislation, as he saw it), became 'master of the constitution'. In discussing, at the beginning of Book III of the *Politics* (1.1275^a22–5^b20), the fundamental rights which make a man a citizen in the full sense of the term, Aristotle treats the ability to take part in judicial decisions as a vital element: it enters into his discussion both under the heading of *krisis* ['judgement'] and under that of *archē*, for sitting as a dicast is to him an important form of *archē* ('magistracy', 'office').³ Again, in his acute, if rather difficult, discussion of the three elements (*moria*) in a constitution, Aristotle (*Pol.* IV 14.1297^b37 ff.) first distinguishes what we might call the deliberative (*to bouleuomenon*), the executive (*to peri tas archas*), and the judicial (*to dikazon*), and then proceeds to define the 'deliberative' element in such a way as to include not only 'war and peace', legislation, and the appointment and examination of magistrates, but also 'death and exile and confiscation of property' – in short, the trial of important criminal cases. Even his comparatively brief section on the judicial

element (IV 16.1300^b13 ff.), which draws a theoretical distinction between eight different types of court, concentrates on five as being specifically 'political': one is for examining the conduct of magistrates (*euthyntikon*), another for dealing with offences against any public interest, a third for cases involving the constitution, and a fourth for trying disputes about the imposition of penalties; a fifth, concerned with private dealings involving large amounts of property (doubtless cases of disputed inheritance in particular), may be a less obvious source of political conflict to us, but not to Aristotle.⁴

The Gerousia, of twenty-eight members aged over sixty plus the two kings, was by far the most important court at Sparta.⁵ The ephors sometimes, perhaps always, formed part of the court when it was trying major cases; but they would supply only one seventh of the total membership of the court (5 out of 35), and would be able to exercise real influence only when the gerontes were equally divided (as at the trial of King Pausanias in 403), or nearly so. It has often been taken for granted, for example by Kahrstedt and Andrewes,⁶ that at least some important political trials must have taken place in the Assembly; but in fact there is not a particle of evidence that the Assembly conducted trials of any sort at any time, and it is highly improbable, especially since we know that even the kings, whose position was more exalted than that of other citizens, were tried before the Gerousia and ephors.⁷ As Andrewes himself says,⁸ 'the Gerousia was the highest lawcourt in Sparta, the only court that could inflict the graver penalties of death or exile or loss of civil rights'. Explicit evidence against political trials being conducted by the Spartan Assembly can be found in Aristotle, *Pol.* III 1.1275^b9–11, a statement which proves that at Sparta there was nothing corresponding to trial by a popular court such as the Athenian Heliæa [the Athenian people meeting in a judicial capacity], and that the right of deciding legal cases was never enjoyed by the ordinary Spartan citizen as such but only if he were an ephor, a member of the Gerousia, or the holder of some other office. (For a discussion of the passage, see Appendix XXV [de Ste Croix, *Origins*, 349–50].) In Xen., *Hell.* V ii.32–5, the Assembly merely decides what to do about Thebes; nothing is said about its trying Phoebidas (or Ismenias, cf. §§35–6). Among all the major Spartan trials we know of, I would admit only one possible (though not probable) exception to the rule that the tribunal was the Gerousia: the case of King Agis II in 418, about which Thucydides (V 63) is uncharacteristically imprecise (see Appendix XXVI [de Ste Croix, *Origins*, 350–3, which lists the trials of kings, with the relevant evidence]. There is no reason to suppose that a judgment took place in the Assembly merely because we are told that the decision was taken by 'the Spartans' (Thuc. 1 128.3; Xen., *Hell.* V iv.13; Plut., *Lys.* 30.1; *Pelop.* 6.1; 13.3; and similar passages) or 'the citizens' (Diod. XIV 89.1); cf. Xen., *Hell.* VI iv.5, where 'by the city' must refer to a court consisting of Gerousia and ephors (see n. 7). Verdicts of Athenian courts are regularly referred to as decisions of 'the Athenians', although delivered as a rule by panels of a few hundred dicasts. So it will have been at Sparta and elsewhere.

There was no lack of important ‘political’ trials at Sparta:⁹ in a little over a hundred years, from the 490s to 378, there were not only at least seven (and perhaps more) trials of kings (see Appendix XXVI [de Ste Croix, *Origins*, 350–3] but also several of military men, including those of Cleandridas (the adviser of King Pleistoanax) in 446;¹⁰ Aristocles and Hipponoidas in 418 (Thuc. V 72.1); Gylippus in 404 (Diod. XIII 106.8–9; Plut., *Lys.* 16–17.1; Athen. VI 233f–4a); Clearchus, c. 403 (Xen., *Anab.* 11 vi.4); Thibron in 399 (Xen., *Hell.* III i.8); Herippidas, Arcesus and Lysanoridas in 378 (Plut., *Pelop.* 13.3; *Mor.* 598f: see H. W. Parke in *CQ* 21 [1927] 159–65); and in particular those of Phoebidas (382) and Sphodrias (378), to be examined presently. Any Spartan, even a king, might be influenced in his course of action by the knowledge that he was likely to be prosecuted if he pursued an unsuccessful policy, in opposition to the wishes of the faction then dominant in the Gerousia. There is an illustration of this in Xenophon (*Hell.* VI iv.4–6), when King Cleombrotus was leading the army in Boeotia, and his friends told him that if he let the Thebans escape without a battle, he would be ‘in danger of suffering the extreme penalty at the hands of the city’. And his enemies commented that this time Cleombrotus would really show whether the rumour of his partiality for the Thebans was true or not. The result was that Cleombrotus, who would have been only too well aware of the personal influence on many gerontes of the passionately anti-Theban King Agesilaus, was prompted to join battle, perhaps against his better judgment.

The case of Phoebidas and Sphodrias became *causes célèbres* throughout Greece, and we must look at them carefully, as they are very revealing (that of Sphodrias in particular) about procedure at Sparta and the way in which important decisions could be taken there. We will take Sphodrias first, although his trial took place about four years later than that of Phoebidas.

Sphodrias¹¹ was the rash and foolish man who, one night in 378, when harmost of Thespieae, made a sudden and unprovoked attack on Athens, with which Sparta was then officially at peace, hoping to get possession of the Peiraeus before daybreak. He failed ignominiously, and his action was a disaster for Sparta: it was one of the direct causes of the Athenian alliance with Thebes and the inauguration of the Second Athenian Confederacy. His exploit was all the more unfortunate in that a Spartan embassy, including at least one friend of King Agesilaus (Etymocles: see Xen., *Hell.* V iv.22, 32) was at Athens at that very time: the Athenians immediately arrested the ambassadors and only released them when persuaded that Sphodrias would be duly tried and executed. Sphodrias, who was generally considered to have done something grossly improper (*deina*: Xen., *Hell.* V iv.25), was recalled by the ephors and prosecuted. Feeling certain that he would be convicted, he fled, and was tried in absence – and was actually acquitted, the only person I can recall in the whole of Greek and Roman history who took to flight when put on a capital charge and yet had judgment pronounced in his favour!

We have a detailed account of what happened, in particular from Xenophon,

who is obviously very well informed and who says roundly that the decision in this case was ‘the most unjust ever given at Sparta’ (*Hell.* V iv.24). I am inclined to say that this is the most valuable account we have in any source of the way in which great issues might be settled at Sparta, behind the scenes. The significance of this story is that it reveals how entirely dependent the verdict was upon the personal decision of King Agesilaus: he obviously ‘controlled’ an appreciable number of the votes in court, which can only have been the Gerousia, sitting with or without the ephors. Those of the judges who belonged to the personal following of the other king, Cleombrotus I, were bosom friends (*hetairoi*) of Sphodrias, and he could evidently count on them to vote for his acquittal. (We are not told about Cleombrotus’ personal position, but he was a much younger man than Agesilaus and had as yet had no opportunity to acquire renown, and he would have counted for very much less than the great Agesilaus.) Sphodrias, however, was afraid that he would be condemned by Agesilaus and his friends, and also by those whose position was ‘intermediate between the two kings’ (*tous dia mesou*) – an interesting phrase which shows that not all the gerontes were ‘clients’ of one or other of the two kings. A homosexual relationship between the sons of Sphodrias and Agesilaus led to Archidamus, the son of Agesilaus, interceding with his own father for the father of his friend. At first Agesilaus was unresponsive, stressing the gravity of the crime, which had indeed done Sparta great harm; but eventually he yielded and procured an acquittal. His reason for doing so is made perfectly clear by Xenophon: it was not the fact of his son’s intercession, but his own deep conviction that a good soldier like Sphodrias was indispensable to Sparta.¹² Scarcity of Spartiates, the *oliganthrōpia* of which Aristotle makes so much in the *Politics*,¹³ was already a very serious problem (see Appendix XVI [de Ste Croix, *Origins*, 331–2, which collects the evidence on *oliganthropia*, ‘shortage of manpower’, at Sparta and identifies the concentration of wealth in a few families as a key factor in its progression]). Seven years later we find Sphodrias among the personal following of Cleombrotus, and (with his son) dying with the king at Leuctra (Xen., *Hell.* VI iv.14).

It is very significant that in Xenophon’s account (*Hell.* V iv.32–3) *the moment Agesilaus decides to vote for acquittal, Sphodrias’ son can take it for granted that that will be the court’s verdict.*

Some four years earlier Agesilaus had also prevented the punishment of another military commander, Phoebidas,¹⁴ who, with the assistance of an oligarchic party of Thebans led by the Polemarch Leontiadas, had seized the Theban Cadmeia in 382, on his own initiative, without any official instructions from the Spartan State, however much private encouragement he may have received beforehand from Agesilaus and others. There is a conflict of evidence in the sources on what happened to Phoebidas.¹⁵ The truth is almost certainly given by Plutarch’s statement in his *Life of Agesilaus* (23.11), that ‘Agesilaus saved Phoebidas’: he will have done this by using his great prestige and influence, either to settle the result of the trial, exactly as in the case of

Sphodrias a little later, or to have it shelved, or conceivably he may have consented to the infliction of a fine, and perhaps paid it himself. Phoebidas certainly turns up again only five years later, as harmost of Thespieae (Xen., *Hell.* V iv.41–5 etc.) in which capacity he, like Sphodrias, justified Agesilaus' faith in him, dying bravely in battle. Xenophon affords some confirmation that his hero Agesilaus did indeed 'save Phoebidas', whether or not some official condemnation was pronounced, for – characteristically, in the circumstances – he says nothing at all about the result of any trial, although he mentions that 'the ephors and most of the citizens were angry with Phoebidas' (*Hell.* V ii.32), and expresses his own disapproval of the Spartan action in not only seizing but retaining possession of the Cadmeia (iv.I). He also mentions the revealing opinion of Agesilaus, that all a Spartan ought to consider was whether Phoebidas had produced a result which was good or bad for Sparta; and that if it was good, there was an old-established rule that such acts of initiative were permissible (ii.32). For the Spartans, even more (if anything) than for other Greeks, the interest of their own city was an absolutely paramount consideration. They might even be brought to realise that other Greeks too could legitimately act upon similar principles. Plutarch (*Alc.* 31.8) tells how Anaxilaus of Byzantium, put on trial at Sparta (in 405–4) for surrendering his city to the Athenians a few years earlier, proved to his judges that the situation had been hopeless and that he had only been 'following the example of the best of the Spartans, for whom what was expedient for their State was the one single criterion of honour and justice'! – and was acquitted, with his colleagues. (Cf. Xen., *Hell.* I iii.19, omitting this part of the story.)

The action of Phoebidas, and the Spartan retention of the Cadmeia, shocked the Greek world. Plutarch (*Ages.* 23.6–8) makes some rather severe comments on the prominent part played in this disgraceful affair by Agesilaus, who was always prating about justice. Like Xenophon, he records disapproval of Phoebidas at Sparta (*Ages.* 23.6). But the failure of the Spartans to punish Phoebidas is far more easily understandable than the acquittal of Sphodrias, for Phoebidas might be regarded as having performed a useful task, whereas the action of Sphodrias was an unmitigated blunder.

At Sparta, according to Andrewes ['Government' (see Ch. 2, p. 68)], 17, 'when it was necessary to take a decision the question erupted in open assembly, and Xenophon makes it clear that in the cases of both Phoebidas and Sphodrias the general opinion of the citizens was a serious factor'. On the contrary, in so far as any 'general opinion' at Sparta is allowed to appear in Xenophon, or for that matter in Plutarch or elsewhere, it is strongly hostile to the men concerned, and – far from its being a 'serious factor' – the court simply takes no notice of it! We are not very well informed about Phoebidas, but in the case of Sphodrias the court is divided into three groups: one is anyway willing to acquit on purely personal grounds, and Agesilaus is able to bring enough of the other two over to the same position. There could hardly be a greater contrast with the Athenian courts, where everything was done in the

open, and even the persons who would make up the dicastery ['jury court'] were not known until the last moment. I am not suggesting that things were 'rigged' in this way when matters were settled in the Spartan Assembly. But I do suggest that even there the extreme deference paid to great men, above all to those kings who had proved themselves worthy of their office, could place enormous influence in their hands.

It was a commonplace among writers on political theory¹⁶ that Sparta had a 'mixed constitution', a blend of monarchy, oligarchy (or aristocracy) and democracy. If we neglect the very great importance of the Gerousia in jurisdiction, we shall be likely to underrate the oligarchic element, surely by far the most weighty. I agree with Forrest ([W. G. Forrest, *A History of Sparta 950–192 BC*, London, 1968], 113): 'When Pindar¹⁷ singled out for praise at Sparta the "counsels of the Elders" he put his finger on what must still have been the mainspring of policy-making, the Gerousia, and, behind the Gerousia, the tight and ever-tightening circle of noble families which could hope to provide its members.' (On the question whether the Gerousia was recruited from a *legally* limited circle of families, see Appendix XXVII [de Ste Croix, *Origins*, 353–4].) From these few families will have come the men of greatest wealth and influence, so often mentioned in our sources, from Herodotus and Thucydides to Plutarch and Pausanias. There was marked inequality of wealth at Sparta, not only in 'pre-Lycurgan' times (Plut., *Lyc.* 8–11 etc.) but also in the fifth and fourth centuries (see Arist., *Pol.* II 9, 1270^a15–39, esp. 16–18). Many different expressions are used for the upper crust of the Spartiates: they are the 'prosperous ones' (*olbioi*, Hdt. VI 61.3), those who were 'of good family, and in wealth among the first' (VII 134.2), 'those who had great possessions' (Thuc. I 6.4), the 'first men' (IV 108.7; V 15.1; Plut. *Nic.* 10.8), the 'rich' (Xen., *Lac. Pol.* V 3; Arist., *Pol.* IV 9, 1294^b 22, 26) or 'very rich' (Xen., *Hell.* VI iv.10–11), those 'from whom the greatest offices are filled' (Xen., *Lac. Pol.* II 2), the 'gentlemen' (*kaloï kagathoi*, Arist., *Pol.* II 9, 1270^b24; Plut., *Lyc.* 17.2). From these same families, too, will have come the great majority of the numerous men (and even women: *Inscriptionen von Olympia* 160 = *Anthologia Palatina* XIII 16; Xen., *Ages.* IX 6; Plut., *Ages.* 20.1; *Mor.* 212b; Paus. III viii.1–2; xv.1; xvii.6; V xii.5; VI i.6 etc.) who made a conspicuous demonstration of their exceptional wealth by breeding horses and even winning chariot races at Olympia and elsewhere, from the mid-sixth century onwards (see Appendix XXVIII [de Ste Croix, *Origins*, 354–5, which assembles the evidence for Spartan victors at Olympia and other major games: there were numerous athletic victors down to the mid-sixth century, but very few for the next 200 years; on the other hand there was a sequence of chariot victors, which demonstrates the presence in Sparta of wealthy families]). One of these horse-breeders, Evagoras, was the only man, apart from Cimon of Athens (father of the great Miltiades), to win three successive victories in the four-horse chariot race at Olympia with the same team (Hdt. VI 103.4). Among the others were Arcesilaus, who won the Olympic chariot race twice (Paus. VI ii.1–2, etc.), and his son Lichas (Thuc. V

50.4; Xen., *Hell.* III ii.21; Paus. VI ii.1–3), proxenos of Argos (Thuc. V 76.3) and victor in the same contest when an old man, who became famous all over Greece for his lavish hospitality to strangers visiting Sparta for the festival of the Gymnopaediae (Xen., *Mem.* I ii.61; Plut., *Cim.* 10.6). Other such Spartans turn up in anecdotes, sometimes of doubtful authenticity: the best attested of these men is the corpulent Naucleidas, who incurred the enmity of Lysander (Agatharchides, *FGrH* 86 F II, *ap.* Athen. XII 55od; cf. Ael., *VH* XIV 7), doubtless by his conduct as an ephor in 404/3, when he supported King Pausanias (Xen., *Hell.* II iv.36).

The picture of Spartan wealth given in Ps.-Plato, *I Alc.* 122c–3b is no doubt exaggerated, but the emphasis on the extent and fertility of Laconia and Messenia and the large numbers of Helots and other servants and of horses and other domestic animals (122de) is not misplaced. But Spartan wealth was very unevenly distributed, at least in the fifth century and later, and the Spartan *homoioi* were ‘Peers’ in little more than name. We may remember Diodorus’ comment (II 39.5) on his idealised Indian society: ‘It is foolish to make laws on a basis of equality for all, but to make the distribution of property unequal’.¹⁸

† Reprinted by permission of the author from *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, London: Duckworth, 1972, 131–8.

¹ Among numerous Athenian examples, see Hyperides IV or III (*pro Euxenippo*), 29–30, col. 22–3, where [‘not in the best interests of the Athenian people’] appears four times.

² Cf. [G. E. M. de Ste Croix, ‘Notes on Jurisdiction in the Athenian Empire’, *CQ* 11, 1961, 94–112, 268–80], at 95, 277–9.

³ See esp. 1275^a23–33, on [*aoristos arche*], ‘indeterminate’ or ‘indefinite’ office.

⁴ Cf. *Pol.* V 4, 1303^b31–4^a17. (In view of the story about Mytilene in 1304^a4–10, it is just as well we have Thuc. III 2!)

⁵ See Xen., *Lac. Pol.* X 2 (capital charges); Arist., *Pol.* II 9, 1270^b 38–40 (important cases), 1271^a5–6 (gerontes were [*aneuthunoi*, ‘exempt from audit’]); III 1.1275^b9–11 (homicide); IV 9.1294^b31–4; Isocr. XII 154; Plut., *Lyc.* 26.2; Ps.-Plut., *Mor.* 217ab; cf. Dem. XX 107; Polyb. VI xlv.5.

⁶ [U. Kahrstedt, *Griechisches Staatsrecht, I. Sparta und seine Symmachie* (Göttingen, 1922, 154–5; A. Andrewes, ‘The Government of Classical Sparta’, in E. Badian (ed.), *Ancient Society and Institutions: Studies Presented to Victor Ehrenberg on his 75th Birthday*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1966, 1–20, at 3, 19 n. 15 (see Ch. 2).]

⁷ Paus. III v.2; cf. the references by Herodotus to a [*dikasterion*, ‘jury court’], in connection with both the condemnations of Leotychidas (VI 85.1; 72.2). And see Xen., *Anab.* II vi.4, where Clearchus is condemned to death [‘by those in authority in Sparta’] – evidently not just the ephors, whom Xenophon has mentioned twice in the last few lines, §§2, 3.

⁸ GCS 16 – correctly, in view of Xen., *Lac. Pol.* X 2; cf. Arist., *Pol.* II 9, 1270^b38–40.

⁹ I leave aside cases of dangerous conspiracy against the State, such as those of Cinadon in c. 399, described by Xen., *Hell.* III iii.4–11; Polyæn. II xiv.1 (the ephors seem to have acted mainly on their own initiative here), or the two in 370–69, mentioned by Plut., *Ages.* 32.6–11, where in the one case King Agesilaus and in the other Agesilaus and the ephors are said to have killed the conspirators (who were citizens) secretly, an act ‘without precedent at Sparta’.

¹⁰ See [de Ste Croix, *Origins*, Ch. V, Pt vii, pp. 196–200] and its n. 95.

¹¹ See Xen., *Hell.* V iv.20–33; Plut., *Ages.* 24–26.1; *Pelop.* 14; Diod. XV 29.5–6; and other sources.

¹² Xen., *Hell.* V iv.32: [‘for Sparta has need of such soldiers’].

¹³ *Pol.* II 9, 1270^a 15–34. Cf. Xen., *Lac. Pol.* I 1: [‘Sparta is one of the city-states which are very short of manpower’].

¹⁴ See Xen., *Hell.* V ii.25 ff., esp. 32; Diod. XV 20 (esp. §2); XVI 29.2–3; Isocr. IV 126; Plut., *Ages.* 23–4; *Pelop.* 5–6; *Mor.* 576a; Polyb. IV xxvii.4; Nepos, *Pelopidas* 1.2–3 etc.

¹⁵ He was fined, according to Polyb. IV xxvii.4; Diod. XV 20.2; Nepos, *Pelopidas* 1.2–3; Plut., *Mor.* 576a

– according to Plut., *Pelop.* 6.1, the enormous sum of 100,000 drachmae (nearly 17 talents)! Cf. Thuc. V 63.2–4, where King Agis II is nearly fined the same sum, again ‘ten myriads of drachmae’. (Perhaps this was essentially intended as a ruinous fine calculated to drive the victim from Sparta.) It is impossible to believe that such a fine was actually inflicted on Phoebidas, and I suggest that in *Pelop.* 6.1 (contrast *Ages.* 23.11, cited in the text below). Plutarch may be misrepresenting a source that used much the same language as Thuc. V 63.2.

¹⁶ See e.g. Arist., *Pol.* II 6, 1265^b33–66^a1; IV 9, 1294^b14–36; cf. II 9, 1270^b6–26; IV 7, 1293^b14–18; Polyb. VI iii.8; x.6–12, etc., with [F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Oxford, 1957,] 1 638–41, 646–8; K. von Fritz, *The Theory of the Mixed Constitution in Antiquity* (New York, 1954), Index, s.v. ‘Sparta’. I have not seen G. J. D. Aalders, *Die Theorie der gemischten Verfassung im Altertums* (1968).

¹⁷ Pind., fr. 199.1 (Snell³), *ap.* Plut., *Lyc.* 21.6.

¹⁸ A perfectly clear passage which modern editors and commentators have often obscured by gratuitous emendation of [*ousias* (‘property’) to *exousias* (‘power’) or *sunousias* (‘society’)]. See B. Farrington, *Diodorus Siculus* (Inaugural Lect., at Swansea, 1936, published 1937) 18, 37 n.5 = *Head and Hand in Ancient Greece* (London, 1947) 68–9, 86–7 n.5.

PART III

The Spartiate World

Introduction

Classical Sparta's reputation for stability was based partly on its complex political system, but Xenophon's explanation for Spartan domination of the Greek world was their *epitedeumata*, habits or customs (*Lac. Pol.* 1.1), and so it is essential also to investigate the social structures which organised the lives of all Spartan citizens. The name *homoioi*, 'peers', used for adult male Spartiates reflected the fact that they were supposed to be similar or alike, a result which was achieved through the common educational system, membership of the *syssitia* or public messes, and participation in the hoplite phalanx. But, as with all aspects of the Spartan image, closer inspection of the ancient evidence reveals divergences and tensions which the mirage of uniformity was intended to conceal or defuse.

Land ownership is one fundamental area where image and reality conflicted, ultimately with unfortunate consequences for the maintenance of the Spartan system. Membership of the citizen body depended on ownership of sufficient property to enable the individual Spartiate to pay his monthly dues to his mess (*syssition*), but by the fourth century there appear to have been significant numbers of citizens who had fallen below the requisite level of wealth. This fact poses problems for the traditions that there had been a redistribution of land at some point in the early Archaic period, probably in the context of the acquisition of the substantial new territories in Messenia, and that Spartiates perhaps only enjoyed the use rather than outright ownership of indivisible portions of land (their individual *kleros*, allotment). The evidence is, inevitably, complex, but the problems have been clarified in an important article by Stephen Hodkinson.¹ [Chapter 4](#) presents Hodkinson's own brief summary of his case, with references to the crucial items of evidence; the article then proceeds to demonstrate how a property distribution which may initially have been reasonably fair would, in the space of a few generations, become substantially skewed through the twin influences of the right of daughters to share the family estate and of defensive marriage strategies, especially of richer families concerned to maintain the integrity of their wealth and status. Thus, even if the tradition of a property distribution is accepted rather than dismissed as a propagandist invention of the late third century in the context of the 'revolutionary' overhaul of Spartan society by Agis and Cleomenes, it would not have contributed to equality between Spartiate families in the Classical period.²

[Chapter 5](#) offers Anton Powell's discussion of some of the important factors

which fostered conformity at Sparta, in order to illustrate how the state replaced the family as the focus for Spartiate loyalties through a variety of practices: communal dining for adult males, marriage practices, homosexual bonding,³ military training, and education. Powell is not afraid to go beyond the evidence to speculate about matters which sources leave unexplained, for example in his discussion of the Spartan practice of *xenelasia*, the periodic expulsion of foreigners (228–9, =Ch. 5, p. 99), but crucially, he maintains the distinction between evidence and hypothesis: it is up to us to decide whether we accept his interpretation or return to the evidence to think again. The overall thrust of Powell's investigation is that the Spartans controlled potential internal tensions reasonably well, but he might be challenged for being too respectful to the ancient sources: his discussion of Spartan drinking is a case in point where he accepts the ancient presentation of Spartans as restrained, but it has been argued that the very attention of observers like Critias and Xenophon to the issue of drinking indicates that there may have been a problem to be concealed behind the Spartan mirage.⁴

In [Chapter 6](#) Hodkinson, like Powell, tackles the question of the Spartan way of life, but on a broader canvas and with a sceptical approach which results in the identification of considerable tensions within the Spartan system. Hodkinson's analysis points to possible conflict between the collective interests of the state, which many aspects of the system were intended to uphold, and the separatist interests of the family, which managed to survive the homogenising influences of Spartan upbringing: this is an important corrective to the assumption, sometimes accepted uncritically, that the public interest was supreme in all respects.⁵ On Hodkinson's interpretation the family in Sparta was not such a marginal institution as Powell, for example, supposes: apart from striving to protect wealth through the marriage and inheritance strategies outlined in Hodkinson's contribution in [Chapter 4](#), reputation and influence were maintained through patronage and office holding, victories in Hellenic games were exploited to advertise family prowess,⁶ and even the homosexual attachments which young Spartiates formed could help the ambitious by creating a network which complemented those created by marriage alliances.⁷

Hodkinson's discussion of the upbringing of Spartiates (245–51) should now be read in conjunction with Nigel Kennell's study.⁸ Kennell argues that the *agoge*, the educational system which was one of the most famous aspects of ancient Sparta, was only fully regulated in the late third century, and that most of our evidence about this institution in later visitors like Plutarch and Pausanias cannot be applied to the classical period. In ancient Sparta education may have been referred to by the generic term *paideia* rather than *agoge*, the word used in most modern discussions.⁹ Kennell's thesis challenges a central aspect of modern interpretations of the Spartan system, but it may be excessively radical. Ducat has now countered by arguing that Kennell too readily argues from silence, namely that a lack of evidence demonstrates that something did not exist at a certain time, a procedure which is particularly

flawed where detailed evidence is in such short supply. Ducat also observes, plausibly, that our sources are likely to have recorded unusual or abnormal aspects of the *agoge*: our evidence is not fully representative, which compounds the problems of understanding the system.¹⁰

Hodkinson also usefully reviews the operation of the army, the institution central to Spartan power but about which much remains uncertain. For further discussion, those interested in military matters can consult, with due caution, John Lazenby's study of the Spartan army.¹¹ In the latter part of the article, not included in this collection, Hodkinson considers how the regimented upbringing of Spartiates may have affected decision-making processes at Sparta: he suggests, reasonably, that Spartans were best at traditional, practised moves, that they could be decisive when issues were clear but in other circumstances were prone to vacillation and procrastination; being irresolute they looked for guidance, which could be provided by the gods, hence the famous religiosity of Sparta, or by outsiders.¹² In this society those with the capacity for decisive action could dominate, which is another factor in the ability of kings to control the political system.

One of the ways in which Sparta was different from Athens was in the rights of women and their behaviour; after the decline of Sparta in the mid-fourth century, female licence was identified as a key weakness in the system, one which was traced right back to the mythical Lycurgus, who imposed a strict regime on men but failed to get women to submit. In [Chapter 7](#) Paul Cartledge reviews the evidence for women at Sparta, starting from Aristotle's famous critique but ranging widely to relate his treatment to modern feminist discussions.¹³ On the questions of female ownership of land and dowries or marriage settlements (137–8, 150–1), it is important to consider Hodkinson's fuller investigation of the impact of Spartan practices on the changing distribution of wealth generation by generation.¹⁴ Daniel Ogden also provides a clear discussion of Spartan attitudes to marriage and child-bearing, although his contention that bastardy was not an important consideration at Sparta because family interests were subordinated to those of the state should be reconsidered in the light of Hodkinson's reinstatement of the importance of the family.¹⁵

Finally, in this part, Robert Parker analyses the role of religion in Spartan life. The first half of his discussion (not included here) presents the evidence for Spartan cults and rituals, accepting that in many respects it is difficult to demonstrate that Spartan practices were different from those of other Greek states – especially since we are poorly informed about religious behaviour in all other states except for Athens.¹⁶ But Sparta naturally had its preferred local deities, most notably the Dioscuri, and religious celebrations were pressed into the service of the Spartan educational and military system. Parker then turns to the role of religion in public life, especially but not exclusively its relevance to Spartan military activity. Sparta is famous for the occasions on which action had to be deferred for religious reasons, and modern rationalist interpreters

have preferred to disregard these excuses and search for policy explanations (167–8). Parker sensibly rejects this approach, but at the same time acknowledges that religious factors were unlikely to impinge without the consent or involvement of human agents. Here again the kings, who were hereditary priests, custodians of Delphic responses, as well as military leaders who organised sacrifices, emerge as key individuals who could exploit divine signs in their own interests.

¹ Hodkinson, 'Land'; further discussion in his *Property*.

² I am not convinced by the suggestion of J. F. Lazenby, 'The Archaic Moira: A Suggestion', CQ 45, 1995, 87–91, that the distribution consisted not of land but of tribute in kind from land.

³ For further important discussion, see Cartledge, 'Pederasty'.

⁴ See James Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens*, London: HarperCollins, 1998, 61–7; contrast E. David, 'Sparta's *kosmos* of Silence', in Hodkinson and Powell, *Sparta*, 117–46, for unquestioning acceptance of the Spartan myth.

⁵ H. W. Singor, 'Admission to the *syssitia* in Fifth-century Sparta', in Hodkinson and Powell, *Sparta*, 67–89, is a case in point: the assumption that the state controlled all aspects of life in Sparta led Singor to reject the evidence for individual *syssitia* controlling admission of new members.

⁶ Hodkinson, 'Culture', e.g. at 152 where he discusses the Damonon victory inscription; cf. Jean Ducat, 'Perspectives on Spartan Education in the Classical Period', in Hodkinson and Powell, *Sparta*, who argues that the family retained a significant role even in such a communal business as the upbringing of Spartan youths.

⁷ Cartledge, 'Pederasty'. The role of personal and family connections in obtaining public office is discussed in Mitchell, *Greeks*, Ch. 4; see also Herman, *Friendship*, 142–54.

⁸ Kennell, *Gymnasium*.

⁹ Though note Ducat, 'Perspectives', 63 n. 3, for rejection of Kennell's argument.

¹⁰ Ducat, 'Perspectives', 44–7.

¹¹ Lazenby, *Army*. This contains six chapters on major battles in which Spartans participated between Thermopylae and Leuctra, which will appeal to the enthusiast for tactical discussions. Of greater general interest is the analysis of military organisation in the fifth century (Ch. 3), though I am not convinced by Lazenby's contention that *perioeci* and Spartiates could not have been included in mixed brigades because of differences in their training regimes: we know nothing about the training of *Perioeci*, but I have no difficulty in accepting that they, along with other inferior or marginal groups at Sparta, strove to ensure that they were as good at fighting as full Spartiates (cf. Cawkwell in Ch.14 below).

¹² As noted by Andrewes, 'Government', 3, and de Ste Croix, *Origins*, 129 (see above, p. 51).

¹³ By contrast E. Millender, 'Athenian Ideology and the Empowered Spartan Woman', in Hodkinson and Powell, *Sparta*, 355–91, starts her discussion with fifth-century Athenian dramatic representations of Spartans and uses these as a control to admit the evidence of later writers such as Aristotle. To my mind this is a much less satisfactory approach, since it seems to presuppose that Aristotle did not have the capacity to discover information and form judgements for himself.

¹⁴ Hodkinson, 'Inheritance'.

¹⁵ Ogden, *Bastardy*, 224–45. I guess that if *mothakes*, or any other types of bastard at Sparta, were to be incorporated into the full citizen body of Spartiates, they would have to receive a significant allocation of property; if this was provided by a non-family patron, or possibly even by the state, Ogden's observation that bastardy was not an issue at Sparta can be reconciled with Hodkinson's view that property transmission was of vital importance for families.

¹⁶ The clearest discussion of Spartan rituals is by Hooker, *Spartans*, Ch. 3; for more recent discussion of specific aspects, see L. Bruit, 'The Meal at the Hyakinthia: Ritual Consumption and Offering', in O. Murray (ed.), *Sympotica*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, 162–74; R. Parker, 'Demeter, Dionysius and the Spartan Pantheon', in R. Hägg, N. Marinatos and G. C. Nordquist (eds), *Early Greek Cult Practice*, Stockholm: Swedish Institute at Athens, 1988, 99–103.

4 *Spartiate Landownership and Inheritance*[†]

STEPHEN HODKINSON

My discussion starts with one of the most fundamental aspects of Spartan society, that of property and wealth; and, in particular, the ownership and inheritance of the most important form of property, land. In most societies whose economies are dependent primarily upon sedentary agriculture the distribution of land and the rules governing its tenure and inheritance exercise a fundamental influence upon the nature of the social system, and there is every indication that the same was true of classical Sparta. My present concern lies exclusively with land held and inherited by the Spartiates, the full citizens, who directed the affairs of the Spartan state and owned most of the best land in Lakonia and Messenia. It is abundantly clear from evidence in Herodotus (6.61.3; 7.134.2), Thucydides (1.6.4), Xenophon (*Lak. Pol.* 5.3; *Hell.* 6.4.10–11) and Aristotle (*Pol.* 1270a18) that throughout the classical period there were marked inequalities in Spartiate ownership of land. These passages, among other evidence, include specific references to activities which required larger than average estates. One example is the maintenance of horses for chariot racing and the cavalry.¹ Another is the provision by the rich to the common messes of extra donations of bread made from wheat, a higher-status and less reliable additional cereal crop compared to the barley which all citizens grew to provide the *alphita* (barley meal) for their *compulsory* mess contributions and for the subsistence of their families.² Beyond this point, however, we move into areas that are highly controversial. Since the 19th century there has been considerable dispute concerning the nature of land tenure and inheritance. Since I have recently made my own contribution to this debate, rather than repeat myself at length, I shall simply summarise here the main conclusions of my study.³

My main negative contention was that there is little of value to be extracted from the accounts of later writers upon whom scholars have often relied. Two main interpretations, founded especially upon the evidence of Plutarch,⁴ have been prominent: one according to which each citizen was merely the life tenant of an indivisible lot which reverted to the state on his death;⁵ another according to which this indivisible lot passed down by primogeniture to the man's eldest son.⁶ Both versions stem from a belief that in the archaic period there had been an equal redistribution of land and that the individual lots allocated in that redistribution had been maintained intact into the fifth century BC. On this view the individual landholder had no right to alienate his lot, either in whole or in part, whether by gift, by sale or by testamentary bequest. Proponents of these interpretations do often suggest that richer

citizens also owned other land which was more private in character; but even on this view the more important category of land was still the type subject to strict regulation. In my study I concluded, firstly, that Plutarch's testimony is contradictory (as is suggested by the existence of two different interpretations of his evidence); secondly, that the systems of land tenure and inheritance outlined above are impracticable; and thirdly, that the essential elements in Plutarch's accounts, namely the supposed redistribution of land, the maintenance of indivisible lots into the fifth century and the systems of land tenure and inheritance themselves, can all be shown to be the products of fourth-century and later invention.

In place of the interpretations just described, I argued that, by reasserting the correct methodology of giving primary consideration to contemporary or near-contemporary evidence, it is possible to construct a more reliable interpretation, according to which land tenure was fundamentally private in character, with only a minimum of state regulation and with women enjoying considerably more property rights than has previously been realised. The evidence suggests that there were two types of land, one of which was called the 'ancient portion' (*archaia moira*).⁷ A landowner was prohibited from selling the ancient portion and sale of other land was shameful; but otherwise there is no evidence for further restrictions concerning either type of land. A person could alienate his land by means of gift or bequest (Arist. *Pol.* 1270a19–21), a right which predates the early fourth century (Xen. *Ages.* 4.5; Plut. *Ages.* 4.1) when the almost certainly fictional law of Epitadeus was supposedly passed (Plut. *Ages.* 5.2–3). A landowner without a male child could also control the disposition of his land, either directly, by adopting a son (Hdt. 6.57.5), or indirectly, through the choice of any husband for his heiress (Hdt. 6.57.4; Arist. *Pol.* 1270a26–9; only an unbetrothed heiress was obliged to marry her next of kin,⁸ and even he might give her in marriage to whomsoever he wished). The basic method by which land was transmitted down the generations was partible inheritance, division among the owner's children (Arist. *Pol.* 1270b1–6; cf. Xen. *Lak. Pol.* 1.8–9). In the absence of children, the inheritance was shared among the nearest kin, starting on the male side (Xen. *Ages.* 4.5; Plut. *Ages.* 4.1).

Women were also landowners. When there were no sons, the daughter(s) inherited the estate (Hdt. 6.57.4); but even when there were sons, daughters still probably received a portion. It is possible that Aristotle's statement (*Pol.* 1270a23–4) that women owned approximately two-fifths of the land reflects no more than a fourth-century increase in the size of dowries or marriage settlements which daughters received from their parents. The more likely explanation, however, is that Spartiate women had long possessed the same inheritance rights as did their counterparts in fifth-century Gortyn on Crete: namely, the right to half the portion due to a son.⁹ (This share was probably normally given to a girl at her marriage as a pre-death or 'anticipated' inheritance, as happened at Gortyn.) That Spartiate women possessed rights of

inheritance even in the presence of sons, not just in their absence (I shall henceforth refer to these different systems as *universal female inheritance* and *residual female inheritance*, respectively), is also suggested by the existence of several royal intra-lineage marriages, including one as early as the mid-sixth century.¹⁰ All these marriages were clearly aimed at the concentration of property and each involved a woman with a surviving brother or other close inheriting kinsman, implying that these women had the right to some property inheritance alongside the male heirs. Spartiate inheritance, therefore, operated on the basis of diverging devolution, according to which the property of both father and mother passed into the hands of children of both sexes.

† Reprinted from *Classical Sparta: Techniques behind her Success*, ed. Anton Powell, London: Routledge, 1989; by permission of the author, editor and publisher.

¹ On leading Spartiates' participation in chariot racing, G. E. M. de Ste Croix, *The origins of the Peloponnesian War* (London, 1972), Appendix XXVII [...].

² Barley is a more reliable crop than wheat, and was consequently the staple cereal for much of Greek antiquity, because it can tolerate a greater degree of drought. The critical minimum amount of precipitation during the growing season (roughly October–May) is around 200 mm for barley, 300 mm for wheat: P. L. J. Halstead, *Strategies for survival: an ecological approach to social and economic change in the early farming communities of Thessaly, N. Greece* (Diss. Cambridge, 1984), Section 2.8.

³ S. Hodkinson, 'Land tenure and inheritance in classical Sparta', CQ 36 (1986) 378ff. My views have not been substantially altered by the discussion of landholding and inheritance in D. M. MacDowell, *Spartan law* (Edinburgh, 1986), ch. V, for a brief critique of which see my review in *JHS* 107 (1987), p. 231f.

⁴ See esp. Plut. *Lyk.* 8.3–6; 16.1; *Agis* 5.2–3; also Polyb. 6.45.1–3; Justin 3.3.3.

⁵ E.g. H. Michell, *Sparta* (Cambridge, 1964), 2.05ff.; P. Oliva, *Sparta and her social problems* (Prague, 1971), 36ff.

⁶ E.g. J. T. Hooker, *The ancient Spartans* (London, 1980), 116ff.; E. David, *Sparta between empire and revolution 404–243 BC* (New York), 46ff.

⁷ Herakleides Lembos 373.12 = Aristotelian *Lak. Pol.* fr. 611.12 (Rose): text and translation in M. R. Dilts, *Heraklides Lembos Excerpta Politiarum* (GRBS Monographs 5, 1971).

⁸ Cf. the case of Lysander's daughters (Plut. *Lys.* 30.6; *Mor.* 230A; Aelian, *Varia Historia* 6.4; 10.15) in which it was not expected that the men to whom they were betrothed would give way to the next of kin.

⁹ Gortyn Gode 4.37–5.9; 6.9–12: text and translation in R. F. Willetts, *The law code of Gortyn, Kadmos Suppl. I* (Berlin, 1967); Ephorus, *FGrH* 70F149, *apud* Strabo 10.4.20. Note also that the division of inheritance originally privately agreed by the claimants to the estate of Dikaiogenes II in late-fifth-century Athens entailed the same 2:1 ratio of male: female inheritance, since the adopted son Dikaiogenes III was given one-third of the estate and the four sisters shared the remaining two-thirds (Isaios 5.6).

¹⁰ The cases referred to are the marriages of (i) Anaxandridas II to his sister's daughter: Hdt. 5.39; (ii) Archidamos II to his step-aunt Lampito: Hdt. 6.71; (iii) Eudamidas II to his aunt Agesistrata: A. S. Bradford, *A prosopography of Lakedaimonians from the death of Alexander the Great, 323 BC, to the sack of Sparta by Alaric* (Munich, 1977), Appendix 6; *id.*, 'Gynaikokratoumenoi: did Spartan women rule Spartan men?', *Ancient World* 14 (1986) 13ff., with a variant genealogy at p. 16. For more detailed discussion of these cases, Hodkinson (n. 3), 400ff.

5 Dining Groups, Marriage, Homosexuality†

ANTON POWELL

Thucydides may have been at fault to claim that Sparta's internal good order was over 400 years old by 404 BC. However, his belief that effective order existed during his own period of political maturity, down to 404, cannot be set aside. He was surely right in stating that Sparta's ability to dominate other *poleis* derived from the stability of her own domestic arrangements.¹ (He might have said the same of Athens. Conversely, two large Greek states which seem to achieve very little in external affairs in relation to their size, Argos and Kerkyra, are recorded as the scene of ferocious civil strife.²) The immediate and irresistible pressure upon Sparta to avoid discord among her citizens came, as we have seen,³ from the desire to keep the huge population of helots at work and away from their masters' throats. In a famous passage, of which the exact meaning is disputed,⁴ Thucydides states either that "most of the relations between the Spartans and the helots were of an eminently precautionary character"⁵ or that "Spartan policy is always mainly governed by the necessity of taking precautions against the helots".⁶ In any case, since both helots and Spartans had an acute sense of military opportunity,⁷ we should expect strenuous attempts to prevent dissension among the Spartans which the helots might exploit. Much of this chapter will be about the mechanisms whereby the unity and discipline of the Spartans were maintained.⁸

Adult male Spartans were obliged to belong to a particular dining group,⁹ which met at night.¹⁰ Inability to share the expenses of this institution disqualified a man from citizenship, at least in Aristotle's day.¹¹ So, presumably, did unwillingness to participate; Xenophon writes that Lykourgos excluded from the citizen body anyone who shrank from the rigorous customs of Spartan life.¹² Nightly dining together was undoubtedly meant to consolidate Spartan society and preserve its traditions.¹³ The citizens of Sparta were known as the *homoioi* ('the equals' or 'those who are similar'),¹⁴ and the *homoioi* had to be homogenised. Xenophon observed that in the other cities of Greece social gatherings usually consisted of men of a particular age, whereas at Sparta old and young met together, in an atmosphere consequently more restrained and conducive to the transmission of the older men's wisdom.¹⁵ Cultural differences and disruptive friction between generations might thus be minimised. (Athens certainly had such friction; at one point, Thucydides shows an Athenian orator appealing for the assembly not to split politically on age lines.¹⁶) According to Herodotos, Sparta was the only Greek state in which the young made way in the street, and gave up their seats, for their elders.¹⁷ Spartan veneration of the old is reflected also in the institution of the *gerousia*,

a court of elders with power over important cases.¹⁸ It is probable that the influence of the elderly, as in other societies, tended – and was expected to tend – towards conservatism in politics. Plato suggests that at Sparta only the old were allowed to criticise the local practices,¹⁹ such change as there might be had seemingly to be filtered through the society's most conservative age-group.

The dining group might also be expected to unify the fighting men and their seniors by diverting attention and affection from the family. Family life, in modern societies at least, appears to be responsible for much of the difference between the characters of individuals; political reformers seeking to generate new, standardised, personalities have sought to reduce the influence of parents upon children.²⁰ Family life may cause people to put the interests of relatives before those of the state; accordingly, reformers ancient and modern have tried to replace family loyalty with something wider. Plato's Republic, in many ways an idealised version of Sparta,²¹ involved citizens not knowing their own close kin but instead treating as relatives all their fellow citizens.²² Thus, it was hoped, affection might be transferred to the wider community. Aristotle wrote of Greek cities with an extreme form of *dēmokratia*, in which the state accepted from women charges of political disloyalty against their own male relatives.²³ In National Socialist Germany children informed similarly against their parents;²⁴ a recent Head of State of West Germany²⁵ was no doubt reacting consciously against that system when he said "I do not love the State; I love my wife."

At Sparta, Xenophon informs us, a husband in the early stages of marriage was discouraged from being seen entering or leaving his wife's presence.²⁶ The reason, he suggests, was a theory that stronger children would be born to couples who yearned lustily for each other rather than being almost sated with sexual activity.²⁷ Perhaps such a theory was influential at Sparta. But we have seen elsewhere that our sources are more likely to be right when they report directly observable facts (such as, in this case, signs of disapproval directed against an indiscreet husband) than when they seek to reconstruct the psychology behind those facts. Young Spartans were trained in stealth, as has been observed. They were also taught to travel at night.²⁸ It should be doubted whether the taboo which Xenophon mentions would have been expected to reduce by very much the sexual activity of young husbands with their wives. To do so might seem to risk reducing the number of conceptions, and among precisely those people, the youngest and strongest, who could be expected to have the fittest children. In other ways the Spartans took drastic measures to keep up the citizen population.²⁹ An alternative explanation of the taboo may be preferable.³⁰ Rather than being expected to have much effect on the amount of marital sex, the restriction might be meant to limit the time young couples spent together. As a proportion of that time, hours spent in sexual activity would increase, to the exclusion of activities productive of wider forms of mutual influence. The first years of marriage at Sparta may have been meant to

teach wives and husbands to see each other mainly as sexual partners, and to produce, in George Eliot's phrase, "a merely canine affection". Xenophon tells strikingly and repeatedly of how news of military defeat was greeted by Spartans. Those whose relatives had died (bravely, as was presumed) appeared most gratified, whereas close kin of the (possibly ignoble) survivors seemed ashamed.³¹ It seems that model Spartans did not love their families; they loved the State.

Aspects of Spartan society conduced less to heterosexuality than to homosexuality.³² In his *Laws* Plato wrote that homosexuality resulted from the (male) dining groups and from male nudity in gymnasia.³³ Records of Sparta from the classical period seem to refer to homosexual boyfriends at least as often as to wives. Particularly revealing are some assertions by Xenophon on this subject. According to him, Lykourgos encouraged association between man and boy, where it was the boy's character that was admired, but decreed that obvious lust for a boy's body should be rejected utterly.³⁴ Xenophon suggests that the lawgiver was successful in this respect. "However," he adds guilelessly, "I am not surprised that some people do not believe this." Among those people was Xenophon himself at other times, when the need to praise Sparta was less prominent in his mind.³⁵ The claim that Sparta avoided homosexuality should be compared with the assertion recorded later by Plutarch, that there was no adultery at Sparta,³⁶ and with the statement made to foreigners during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s, that there was no adultery in China.

Aristotle writes that soldierly and warlike peoples appear to be profoundly influenced either by heterosexual or by homosexual attachments.³⁷ It seems to have been his view that Spartans were devoted to the heterosexual kind,³⁸ which would give strong support to Xenophon's general claim. However, Aristotle proceeds to use the idea of the Spartans' eager sexuality to explain his own (indignant) observation that, during the period of Sparta's empire, much was administered by women. If Aristotle's opinion on heterosexuality was evolved as an explanation of the prominence of Spartan women, it may seem to be feebly based. That prominence can be accounted for easily without assuming that male Spartans were unusually attached to their women. From a very small citizen population Sparta had to supply soldiers and administrators to control a large empire, after 404. In the resulting shortage of trustworthy men to control things at Sparta, citizen women might well prove indispensable, particularly since they had more knowledge of the men's world than (for example) their cloistered Athenian sisters.³⁹

On the subject of Spartan sexuality we are faced with conflicting generalisations from Plato, on the one hand, and Xenophon with Aristotle, on the other. Detail is a proper test of the general statement, and references to particular homosexual attachments of Spartans are conspicuous even by Greek standards.⁴⁰ The regent Pausanias was betrayed to the ephors, according to Thucydides, by a former boyfriend (*paidika*).⁴¹ Xenophon's hero, King

Agelaios, whose own relations with attractive boys forced themselves on the writer's attention, had a son, Arkhidamos, whom Xenophon describes as in love with a handsome Spartan youth named Kleonymos.⁴² Alketas, a Spartan commander, is recorded by Xenophon as having lost control of the Euboian town of Oreos as a result of paying attentions to a local boy.⁴³ Homosexuality may have been seen as making a positive contribution to the solidarity of the *homoioi*. Partners, or former partners, acted in battle and elsewhere under each other's gaze or even by each other's side. Thus each might have a special motive for not bringing discredit – or danger – on himself or his mate.⁴⁴ According to Xenophon, Kleonymos gave Arkhidamos his word – after receiving some vital help from Arkhidamos' father – that he would try to take care that Arkhidamos would never be ashamed of his friendship.⁴⁵

He did not lie; during his lifetime at Sparta he performed every action that is esteemed there, and at Leuktra was the first Spartan to die, fighting ... in the midst of the enemy. His death pained Arkhidamos to the limit, but, as he had promised, he brought him credit and not disgrace.

If Xenophon is right, the nature of Arkhidamos' affection for the other man was not discreditable. Nor was his eventual grief, which contrasts interestingly with the fortitude displayed by, and thought creditable in, relatives of those who died in the same battle. We read elsewhere in Xenophon's *Hellenika* of a Spartan commander, Anaxibios, who found himself in a hopeless military position and chose, with fellow officers, to stand his ground and die. The rest of the force fled, save for Anaxibios' *paidika*, who stayed by his side, evidently until death.⁴⁶ Xenophon's point in referring to this devoted individual by his sexual status, and not by his name, is probably that the sexuality produced the exceptional loyalty. In spite of himself, Xenophon allows us to see why in a warrior society homosexual affections may have been privileged.

In their dining groups Spartans – rich and poor together – ate the same food,⁴⁷ the plainness of which became famous.⁴⁸ Thus were neatly removed two potential sources of friction between different sections of the citizen group. Rich men of other Greek cities were sometimes referred to as 'the stout'. Plato, who stated that an oligarchically-controlled *polis* was in reality two cities, of rich and poor, alluded – with his fat rich man and his thin pauper – to conspicuous differences in diet which might encourage division and revolution.⁴⁹ Not only did the system of dining groups meet that problem; it also seems to have excluded the *symposion*, the private drinking party at which wealthy men of like mind might reinforce their social distinctness and perhaps plot revolution.⁵⁰ (The phenomenon of Dutch Courage was familiar to Greeks and Romans; Julius Caesar was to be described as the only man to undertake revolution while sober.⁵¹) Megillos, the Spartan character in Plato's *Laws*, boasts that in the cities controlled by Sparta there are no *symposia* and no one gets away with drunkenness.⁵² Other contemporaries with an admiration for Sparta praise the city for her sobriety. Xenophon commends

King Agesilaos for regarding drunkenness as madness,⁵³ as indeed it would have been, given the sense of military opportunity which the helots shared with the Spartans. Predictable mass intoxication at a festival of citizens would have presented rebellious subjects with a wonderful chance; Kritias wrote in the late fifth century that the Spartans had no day set aside for excessive drinking.⁵⁴ But apart from its military aspect, drunkenness might amount to a display of luxury, irritating to the poor onlooker;⁵⁵ that, too, helps to explain the sobriety of Sparta.

In addition to the schooling together of the children of rich and poor, further devices for promoting social harmony included the wearing by the rich of clothes “of a sort that even any poor man could get”⁵⁶ (compare modern remarks on “classless” denim). Thucydides comments on the Spartans’ moderation in dress, and on the unusual lengths to which better-off Spartans went in assimilating their style of life to that of ordinary citizens.⁵⁷ There was also a limited sharing of wealth outside the dining groups.⁵⁸ (Athens for her own reasons of social harmony had laws to restrain the spending of the wealthy on *symposia*⁵⁹ and other forms of display.⁶⁰) But, given the existence of rich men, to deny any outlet for showing off wealth might itself be provocative – to the wealthy themselves. And the discontented rich are usually in a better position to make a revolution than the discontented poor. In Athens a permitted form of display involved expensive horses, which could serve the common good as cavalry mounts in wartime. Rich Athenians often chose for their children names with the element *-hipp-*, ‘horse’.⁶¹ Similarly at Sparta. In a single source, Xenophon’s *Hellenika*, we meet Alexippidas, Euarhippos, Herippidas, Hippokrates, Kratesippidas, Lysippos, Mnasippos, Orsippos, Pasippidas and Zeuxippos, all prominent Spartans and therefore likelier than not to be from the wealthier section of society.⁶² It is also made clear by Xenophon that horses used in battle by Spartan cavalry were reared by “the richest men” of Sparta.⁶³

The enthusiasm of many Spartans for patronising chariot-racing teams is well documented.⁶⁴ In the early fourth century, as wealth poured in from Sparta’s new overseas empire, this lavish competition seems to have caused a certain tension. Xenophon records King Agesilaos as having tried to demonstrate that the production of fine chariot-horses was not a mark of manly virtue but rather of wealth, by persuading his sister, Kyniska, to rear a victorious team.⁶⁵ We do not know whether Agesilaos succeeded in reducing the eagerness of rich men for this sport. (Its aura may be better appreciated if we recall the vicarious virility now associated with motor racing.) There is, however, some evidence that Kyniska’s victory had the effect of inducing other rich women to patronise chariot teams.⁶⁶ Ironically, by advertising his point that it was wealth rather than manliness which counted in this sphere, Agesilaos may have intensified the competition by bringing in a new group of enthusiasts. The participation of women would seem to confirm that one motive of patrons had no reference to gender, but was the display of the very

wealth which Agesilaos hoped to belittle.

MILITARY TRAINING AND THE SCHOOLING OF THE YOUNG

In his *Constitution of the Spartans* Xenophon writes that Lykourgos arranged for the Spartans to dine communally, where they could be observed easily, because he knew that when people are at home they behave in their most relaxed manner.⁶⁷ Since the standards of public morality at Sparta were strenuous, we might anyway have expected to find an unusually large proportion of life being spent under public supervision.⁶⁸ Another, more strenuous, activity, which again must have involved lengthy exposure to public view, was military training. The Periklean funeral speech, likely of course to reflect some Athenian bias against Sparta, suggests that Spartan soldiers depended more on preparation and deceit than on spontaneous courage.⁶⁹ Xenophon states that the Spartan hoplite formation is not, “as most people think”, exceedingly complex.⁷⁰ But even he admits that Spartan soldiers perform with great ease manoeuvres which others think very difficult,⁷¹ and that fighting in an improvised position, amid confusion, “is not ... easily learnt except by those schooled under the laws of Lykourgos”.⁷² It hardly needs saying that the apparent simplicity in the movements of any superior athlete or trained human formation is likely to be the product of laborious practice. Xenophon’s willingness to concede the importance to the Spartans of training, and his reluctance to admit the existence of complexity in their manoeuvres, together fit very well with a theme of Spartan propaganda which we identified in an earlier chapter.⁷³ Sparta wished to discourage the idea that there was anything clever about her military actions, which an intelligent opponent might learn to counter at little cost. Instead, emphasis was laid on the hardness of Spartan hoplites and of their training, which enemies from more comfortable cities might despair of matching. If, distrustful of this Spartan theme, we assumed that Xenophon’s “most people” were right, and that there was much complexity in the manoeuvres taught at Sparta, we should be able to account – in agreement with the Periklean funeral speech⁷⁴ – for the periodic expulsions of foreigners from Sparta.⁷⁵ These could have been the occasions for practising the more complicated, or the deceptive, moves. Manoeuvres involving all or most of the army would have needed concealment additionally so as to protect a secret of great significance – the size of Sparta’s fighting population.

Xenophon, who cannot with consistency argue that the expulsions were meant to hide complex manoeuvres, suggests instead that their purpose was to remove foreign influences.⁷⁶ This may be part of the explanation. But it raises a less familiar question, which Xenophon does not tackle: why did Sparta not exclude foreigners all the year round? Diplomacy might be conducted a few

miles from the city,⁷⁷ and trade carried on at some remote frontier or coast. Given the generally coherent pattern of Sparta's political arrangements, and her policy of promoting ignorance and error in her enemies, the admission of Greeks from other states (including, it seems, the astute and menacing Perikles⁷⁸) is unlikely to have resulted from oversight. Some positive benefit was probably expected. It will be argued below that the Spartans were skilled in visual propaganda. Their practice of this in many other contexts may suggest that they allowed limited access to their city precisely in order that visitors would take away impressive images. The idea of such motivation was certainly known to the Greeks; it is involved in Herodotos' story about Greek spies, captured by the Persians on the eve of Xerxes' invasion, and deliberately set free to report the daunting facts about the scale of the Great King's forces.⁷⁹

Aristotle, who has words of strong disapproval for the Spartan system of educating the young,⁸⁰ concedes that "one might praise" the Spartans for the great care they took in having that system run communally by the state.⁸¹ What Xenophon says of other Spartans was no doubt true also of children: that any who evaded the burdensome processes imposed by the state were excluded by the rules of Lykourgos from the privileges of citizenship.⁸² By educating the children of rich and poor together, Sparta eliminated much friction which might otherwise have arisen in adult life, among those of diverse upbringing. Perikles (as reported by Thucydides), Xenophon and Aristotle concur in describing Spartan education with words from the Greek root *pon-*, which connotes toil or suffering. Perikles speaks of the practice in suffering undergone by young Spartans, as their education prepared them to show manly courage (*to andreion*).⁸³ Aristotle states that the Spartans made their children bestial through *ponoi*, with the aim of producing manly courage (*andreia*).⁸⁴ He goes on to blame Sparta for concentrating on this quality to the exclusion of others. In this context Aristotle is interested in explaining the military downfall of Sparta. He seems to have meant that Sparta fell because other states had come to match her training while having additional attainments which Sparta lacked. Here he perhaps exaggerates the narrowness of Sparta's educational ideals and attainment. Elsewhere in the same work he has a different explanation of the city's downfall which he does not mention here, that Sparta perished through shortage of population.⁸⁵ In this second context there is in turn no reference to the explanation involving narrowness of character. It may be that the two explanations were intended as complementary.⁸⁶ On the other hand, there may be at work in both passages the tendency to inflate a single factor into *the* deep-seated malaise. (In passing, it is interesting that Aristotle, even while blaming Sparta for narrowness and bestiality, seems to have accepted the Spartans' own propaganda point,⁸⁷ that their sheer toughness had brought them to power.)

When Xenophon describes Spartan education, he has a very different angle from Aristotle. He writes earlier in the fourth century, to explain the success,

at the time, of his friends the Spartans. In spite of his plain bias, he is more plausible than Aristotle when he asserts that Spartan education produced useful qualities besides crude animal courage. Xenophon stresses the instilling of obedience and *aidōs* – willingness to defer to the moral opinions of others.⁸⁸ Both qualities have their dangers; as Euripides hinted,⁸⁹ *aidōs* might be good or bad, depending on the nature of the moral opinions deferred to. But in a state outnumbered and hemmed in by potential enemies, as Sparta was, the cohesion promoted by these two qualities would in general be of the greatest importance. The willingness of Spartans to die on the battlefield, which will be examined below, was not a result merely of bestial courage, whatever that might be. It derived in part from a sophisticated and perhaps peculiarly human consideration, that death was preferable to life with dishonour of the hurt-fulness which Sparta contrived for cowards. Not only was that dishonour imposed with unusual vigour;⁹⁰ Spartan *aidōs* would involve an unusual sensitivity to the community's disapproval.

A detailed and believable account of the rigours of Spartan upbringing is given by Xenophon in his *Constitution*. Boys were supervised by an adult of high standing, in contrast, as Xenophon notes, to the child-minders of other Greek cities, who were slaves.⁹¹ This reflects not only the importance attached to education at Sparta, but also the difficulty of keeping children and youths to so strict a discipline. Slacking must have been a familiar and threatening event,⁹² and was heavily punished by the adult supervisor.⁹³ Young men with whips also punished delinquents.⁹⁴ (This is one of several references to the role of the whip in Spartan education;⁹⁵ Plato observes that Spartans were educated “not by persuasion but by violence”.⁹⁶) Children were made to go barefoot and to wear only a single cloak whatever the season.⁹⁷ They were also kept hungry, and were permitted to steal food.⁹⁸ Boys caught doing so were severely whipped, but only as an incentive to steal more discreetly.⁹⁹

Theft offended against two ideals of Spartan society: obedience and respect for elders. So assuming, by rule of thumb, rationality in this successful society, we should look for some considerable benefit, one sufficient to outweigh that disadvantage. The military usefulness of a training in deceit has already been stressed, and Xenophon states that boys stole in order to become better warriors.¹⁰⁰ But we are left vague as to the military context in which a soldier might need to live off the land. In another passage, Xenophon writes that Spartans on expedition were discouraged from going far from camp, at least in some circumstances.¹⁰¹ The aftermath of defeat might require irregular foraging, but the Spartan system did not countenance the survival of defeat. The education in theft may need a different explanation. The helot revolts which we hear of were mostly large affairs, which Sparta could not keep secret, if only because she needed outside help to deal with them. How common were small-scale revolt and brigandage? That we hear little of them is hardly surprising. Masters of deceit, secrecy and military opportunism, the Spartans were not going to advertise gratuitously their own distractions. In connection

with the Athenian seizure of Pylos in Messenia, Thucydides states that the Spartans had previously been inexperienced in regard to brigandage and the kind of fighting which went with it.¹⁰² His opinion cannot be dismissed, though we may wonder how he arrived at it. He is in effect putting forward a very large and vulnerable generalisation – that in a long preceding period the Spartans had always or almost always been uninvolved with brigandage – about a state whose desire to obscure its own circumstances he notes in this very passage. Also, he himself records that, at the start of the Pylos episode, the Athenians got help from Messenian brigands “who happened to be present”.¹⁰³ We may suspect that irregular fighting in Spartan territory had a longer history than Thucydides’ Peloponnesian informants could or would make clear. Since Tegea over the northern border would not harbour runaway helots, taking to the hills or the coasts and living by plunder off the rich lands of Lakonia and Messenia may have been the resort of numerous small groups of helots who had lost patience with their masters. Guerrilla notoriously imposes its own tactics on the opposition. That, perhaps, was why young Spartans were taught to live off the land, deprived of food and normal clothing.

† Reprinted from *Athens and Sparta: Constructing Greek Social and Political History from 478 BC*, London: Routledge, 1998; by permission of the author and publisher.

¹ Thuc. I 18 1.

² On Argos, see especially Diod. XV 57 3–58 4; on Kerkyra, Thuc. III 70–81, IV 46ff.

³ Chapter 4 [of Powell, *Athens*].

⁴ Thuc. IV 80 3.

⁵ Cf. [A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, 5 vols, Oxford 1945–81], III, 547f.

⁶ G. E. M. de Ste Croix, [*The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, London, 1972], 92.

⁷ On the Spartans, see above, Chapter 4 [of *Athens*]; on the helots, Arist. *Pol.* 1269a.

⁸ For a subtle and wide-ranging review of internal tensions which Sparta had to overcome, S. Hodkinson, [‘Social Order and the Conflict of Values in Classical Sparta’, *Chiron* 13, 1983, 241–81].

⁹ E.g. Hdt. I 65 5; Xen. *Lac. Pol.* V 2–7; cf. Alkman quoted at Strabo X 482.

¹⁰ Xen. *Lac. Pol.* V 7.

¹¹ Arist. *Pol.* 1271a, which refers to the arrangement as “ancestral”. However, cf. Xen. *Lac. Pol.* X 7 (a vaguer, idealising, passage).

¹² Xen. *Lac. Pol.* X 7.

¹³ Cf. Xen. *Lac. Pol.* V 2. A similar rationale has been put forward in our own day for preserving communal dining among members of Cambridge colleges and trainee barristers at the Inns of Court.

¹⁴ E.g. Xen. *Hell.* III 3 5, *Lac. Pol.* X 7, XIII 1.

¹⁵ Xen. *Lac. Pol.* V 5.

¹⁶ Thuc. VI 18 6; cf. Xen. *Mem.* III 5 15; W. G. Forrest, *Yale Classical Studies*, XXIV (1975), 37–52.

¹⁷ Hdt. II 80 1.

¹⁸ Xen. *Lac. Pol.* X 2 (the old more respected than those physically in their prime); Arist. *Pol.* 1270b (senility and the *gerousia*); cf. Xen. *Hell.* V 3 20, *Lac. Pol.* XIII 7; *Plat. Laws* 634d–e. See de Ste Croix, *Origins* (index, under *Sparta; Gerousia*).

¹⁹ *Plat. Laws* 634d–e.

²⁰ As, e.g., in Communist Russia and National Socialist Germany.

²¹ See E. Rawson, *The Spartan Tradition in European Thought*, Oxford, 1969, 64.

²² *Plat. Rep.* 463c ff.

²³ Arist. *Pol.* 1313b.

²⁴ R. Grunberger, *Social history of the Third Reich* [London, 1971], 151f.

²⁵ Gustav Heinemann.

²⁶ Xen., *Lac. Pol.* I 5.

²⁷ Cf. the idea expressed in *King Lear* (Act I, scene 2), that bastards get from the circumstances of

their conception a superior vigour as compared with the legitimate, “got [conceived] ’tween asleep and wake”.

²⁸ Xen. *Lac. Pol.* V 7; Plat. *Laws* 633c; cf. Thuc. IV 103 1, 110 1, 135 1, V 58 2, VII 4 2; Diod. XIII 72 3.

²⁹ See below.

³⁰ According to one modern suggestion, by effectively not recognising a marriage in its early stages the Spartans sought to facilitate divorce in cases of infertility; W. K. Lacey, *The family in classical Greece* [London, 1968], 198.

³¹ [See below Powell, *Athens*, pp. 233–4].

³² P. A. Cartledge [‘The Politics of Spartan Pederasty’, *PCPS* 27, 1981], 17–36.

³³ Plat. *Laws* 636a–c.

³⁴ Xen. *Lac. Pol.* II 13.

³⁵ At *Hell.* V 3 20 the word *paidikōn* may refer to homosexual boyfriends (as de Ste Croix suggests, *Origins*, 140) or, as often, merely to things of childhood.

³⁶ Plut. *Lyc.* XV 10.

³⁷ Arist. *Pol.* 1269b.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Further on Spartan women, see below.

⁴⁰ In general on the openness of homosexuality in archaic and classical Greece see K. J. Dover, *Greek homosexuality* [London, 1978], *passim* and especially the evidence cited there *from vase-painting*.

⁴¹ Thuc. I 132 5. The person in question was not a Spartiate.

⁴² *Hell.* V 4 25. Xenophon evidently felt some awkwardness over Agesilaos’ own relations with the ardent Persian boy Megabates; *Ages.* V 4–7 (cf. esp. 6 with *Lac. Pol.* II 14); cf. *Hell.* IV 1 39f. (Agesilaos’ regard for another youth, “still at the desirable age”).

⁴³ Xen. *Hell.* V 4 57.

⁴⁴ Cf. Xen. *Symp.* VIII 34f.

⁴⁵ Xen. *Hell.* V 4 33.

⁴⁶ Xen. *Hell.* IV 8 38f.

⁴⁷ Xen. *Lac. Pol.* V 3; Arist. *Pol.* 1294b. On the kings’ double rations, Xen., *op. cit.* XV 4.

⁴⁸ E.g. Hdt. IX 82. Tales proliferated, as of the visitor from luxurious Sybaris, who felt he had at last understood the Spartans’ willingness to die in battle when he had experienced one of the meals on which they had to live; Athen. 518e.

⁴⁹ Plat. *Rep.* 551d, 556d; cf. 422e–423a.

⁵⁰ Aristophanes’ *Wasps* gives a lively comic sketch of a vehement democrat converted into an arrogant oligarch by attending a *symposion*; esp. 1326–449; cf. N. R. E. Fisher [‘Drink, *Hybris* and the Promotion of Harmony in Sparta’, in A. Powell (ed.), *Classical Sparta: Techniques behind her Success*, London, 1989, 26–50].

⁵¹ Suetonius *Life of the Divine Julius* 53. Cf. Arist. *Nic. Eth.* 1117a.

⁵² Plat. *Laws* 637a–b.

⁵³ Xen. *Ages.* V 1; cf. *Lac. Pol.* V 4.

⁵⁴ In H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* [6th edn, Berlin, 1952], 88 no. 6; translated by K. Freeman, [*The Pre-Socratic Philosophers: A Companion to Diels’ Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Oxford, 1946], 154f. Cf. Plat. *Laws* 637b for communal drunkenness at Sparta’s colony Taras (later Tarentum), at a festival; Sparta herself is contrasted.

⁵⁵ Pittakos, the anti-aristocratic ruler of Mytilēnē, made famously severe regulations against drunkenness; Arist. *Pol.* 1274b, *Rhet.* 1402b.

⁵⁶ Arist. *Pol.* 1294b.

⁵⁷ Thuc. I 6 4.

⁵⁸ Xen. *Lac. Pol.* VI 3; Arist. *Pol.* 1263a.

⁵⁹ [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 50 2.

⁶⁰ S. C. Humphreys, [‘Family Tombs and Tomb Cult in Ancient Athens: Tradition and Traditionalism’], *JHS*, 100 (1980), 96–126.

⁶¹ See esp. Aristoph. *Clouds* 63ff.

⁶² Xen. *Hell.* II 3 10; III 4 6; I 1 23; I 1 32; III 2 29; VI 2 4; IV 2 8 etc. See now S. Hodkinson [‘Inheritance, Marriage and Demography: Perspectives upon the Success and Decline of Classical Sparta’, in Powell, *Techniques*, 79–121].

⁶³ Xen. *Hell.* VI 4 10f., cf. *Ages.* IX 6. The mobility given by the horse might allow Spartiates to combine supervision of their large estates with the necessary attendance at Sparta itself. Also, mounted Spartans would present an intimidating spectacle to helots.

⁶⁴ E.g. de Ste Croix, *Origins*, 3 5 5; [P. A. Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History c. 1300–*

362 BC, London, 1979], 233.

⁶⁵ Xen. *Ages.* IX 6.

⁶⁶ Pausan. III 8 1, 15 1, 17 6, V 12 5.

⁶⁷ Xen., *Lac. Pol.* V 2.

⁶⁸ Sparta is very likely the target of the remarks in the Periklean funeral speech (Thuc. II 37 2) about suspicion and disapproval directed against fellow citizens who sometimes allow themselves to relax; cf. Xen. *Lac. Pol.* IV 4.

⁶⁹ Thuc. II 39 1.

⁷⁰ Xen. *Lac. Pol.* XI 5.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷³ Chapter 4 [of Powell, *Athens*].

⁷⁴ Thuc. II 39 1: “we [Athenians] never use exclusion of foreigners (*xenēlasia*) to prevent anyone from learning or seeing something which, being revealed, it would profit an enemy to see; we rely not for the most part on preparation and deceit but rather on spontaneous courage”.

⁷⁵ See the references collected by H. Schaefer in Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, *RE* (article under *xenēlasia*).

⁷⁶ Xen. *Lac. Pol.* XIV 4.

⁷⁷ Cf. Xen. *Hell.* II 2 13, 19, on the use of Sellasia.

⁷⁸ Thuc. II 13 1 makes it clear that King Arkhidamos of Sparta was *xenos* of Perikles. The institution of *xenia* involved the exchange of hospitality.

⁷⁹ Hdt. VII 146f.

⁸⁰ See below.

⁸¹ Arist. *Pol.* 1337a.

⁸² Xen. *Lac. Pol.* III 3, cf. X 7.

⁸³ Thuc. II 39 1, cf. 4 and I 84 3, where King Arkhidamos is reported as speaking of the severity (*khalepotēs*) of the Spartan upbringing.

⁸⁴ Arist. *Pol.* 1338b.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 1270a.

⁸⁶ Aristotle might perhaps have argued that the narrowness of the Spartan education blinded the community to the danger of the declining population.

⁸⁷ Cf. Thuc. I 84 4.

⁸⁸ Xen. *Lac. Pol.* II 2; cf. Thuc. I 84 3, *Aidōs* was recognised as a divinity at Sparta; Xen. *Symp.* VIII 35. [For further discussion, see now N. Richer, ‘*Aidōs* at Sparta’, and N. Humble, ‘*Sōphrosyne* and the Spartans in Xenophon’, both in Hodkinson and Powell, *Sparta*, 91–115, 339–53.]

⁸⁹ Eur. *Hipp.* 385–7. At the Nuremberg trials after the Second World War, obedience to orders was ruled unacceptable as a defence to charges of war crimes. In other words, inter-national law – as defined by the presiding powers – required (on pain of death) that certain orders be disobeyed or evaded.

⁹⁰ See below [Powell, *Athens*, pp. 233–4].

⁹¹ Xen. *Lac. Pol.* II 2.

⁹² Xenophon has a word for it, used several times – *rhadiourgein* (*Lac. Pol.* II 2, IV 4, V 2, XIV 4).

⁹³ *Ibid.* II 2.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Xen. *Lac. Pol.* II 9, *Anab.* IV 6 15; Plat. *Laws* 633b.

⁹⁶ Plat. *Rep.* 548b.

⁹⁷ Xen. *Lac. Pol.* II 3f.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5–7; *Anab.* IV 6 14f.

⁹⁹ Xen. *Lac. Pol.* II 8.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, XII 4.

¹⁰² Thuc. IV 41 3.

¹⁰³ Thuc. IV 9 1, cf. 53 3.

6 Social Order and the Conflict of Values in Classical Sparta†

STEPHEN HODKINSON

I THE SPARTIATE SOCIAL ORDER AND WAY OF LIFE¹

The details of the Spartan citizen organization in the classical period can be summarized under three headings: first, a political system in which power and decision-making were divided among the kings, ephors, elders and assembly; secondly, a military and economic system according to which full citizenship was extended to a body of several thousand men who all became full-time hoplites supported by produce delivered by the helots who worked their lands;² thirdly, a social and ‘ritual’ system as part of which every citizen (except the two kings and their immediate heirs) was compelled, especially during his upbringing, to accept a common, public way of life. It is the social and ‘ritual’ system which lies at the centre of my analysis. In order to provide a clear background for the following discussion it is worth outlining the main stages of the Spartiates’ life-cycle.³

From the age of 7 until between his 18th and 19th birthdays a young Spartiate had to undergo the full-time state education, the *agoge*, as described in Xenophon’s *Polity of the Lakedaimonians* (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 2) and Plutarch’s *Life of Lykourgos* (Plut., *Lyk.* 16, 7–18). The generic term for a boy between these ages was *pais* (pl. *paides*). Either straightaway, or possibly from the age of 12 (cf. Plut., *Lyk.* 16, 12–14), he had to sleep away from home with his contemporaries in the barracks, a practice which continued until he reached the age of 30. Between his 18th and 19th birthdays he completed his initial training in the *agoge*. From this point until his 20th birthday he remained under strict control and was kept fully occupied with duties (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 3), especially perhaps as a reservist for the army.⁴ At 20 he became a full member of the army and, probably also at this time, of a common mess, or *syssition*, (cf. Plut., *Lyk.* 15, 4–7, esp. 6) in which, failing good reason, he was obliged to eat his evening meal (Plut., *Lyk.* 12, 4; Antiphanes, ap. Athenaios 4, 143A). The term for a Spartiate between his 20th and 30th birthdays was *hebon* (pl. *hebontes*; cf. Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 4, 1–6). During this period of his life he could probably attend and vote at the assembly. But he remained under the ultimate authority of the *paidonomos*, the adult who had overall responsibility over the upbringing of males aged between 7 and 30 (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 4, 6; cf. 2, 2; Plut., *Lyk.* 17, 2). He was allowed to marry; indeed there were strong pressures upon him to do so (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 9, 5; Plut., *Lyk.* 15, 2–3; *Moralia* 228A).⁵ Only

when he was 30 years old, however, was he allowed to leave the barracks and live at home with his wife and family and take care of the management and supply of his own household (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 1, 5–6; Plut., *Lyk.* 15, 4–10; 25, 1). He now became eligible to hold major state offices (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 4, 7). Although no longer under the continuous direct control of any official, he was still required to keep fit for military service through hunting. He was obliged to serve in the army until he reached the age of 60, and to dine in his *syssition*. At 60 he became eligible for election to lifelong membership of the *gerousia*, the council of twenty-eight elders, or *gerontes* (Plut., *Lyk.* 16; cf. Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 10, 1–3; Aristotle, *Politics* 127ob35–41; Polybius 6, 45, 5; Plut., *Agesilaos* 4, 3). Although his military service had ceased, he still dined in his *syssition* (cf. Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 5, 7; Plut., *Lyk.* 26, 8) and he was expected to spend most of his day in public with his contemporaries, instructing and correcting younger Spartiates (Plut., *Lyk.* 25, 1–3).

This way of life put into effect at least three principles which had had only a minor role in the aristocratic society which had preceded the seventh century crises: first, *uniformity*, an innovation highlighted by Thucydides (1, 6, 4), who commented that it was the Lakedaimonians who first began to dress simply and that in general the rich as far as possible adopted an equal style of life with the many; secondly, *the priority of collective interests* over private ones, enshrined in the compulsory nature of the common way of life as well as in the particular regulations enforced within it; thirdly, an insistence upon *conformity* to those regulations, involving adherence to specified types of action and standards of behaviour.⁶ The ideology underlying these principles is summed up by the term by which the Spartiates were known, the *homoioi*, variously translated as Equals, Peers or Similar.⁷

The establishment of this new ideology did not, however, entirely undermine the significance of aristocratic values. Part of the compromise between noble and non-noble citizens was the retention during the classical period of several influences which had previously either underpinned noble rule or contributed towards establishing an order of precedence among aristocrats themselves. Four of these are especially worthy of attention.

First, *wealth*. There are numerous references to the existence of Spartiates of superior wealth in the classical period. Despite any distribution of land in the archaic period, ownership of landed property was never equal and became more unequal over the course of time.⁸ Secondly, *birth*. It emerges from Plutarch's account of the revolutionary plans of Lysander (*Lys.* 24, 2–6, esp. 5) that some Spartiates were counted as descendants of Herakles and others not, a distinction of sufficient importance that, according to one version, Lysander intended to make only the former eligible for his proposed elective kingship. Among the Herakleidai the kings were especially distinguished by their birth (Thuc. 5, 16, 2; Xen., *Agesilaos* 1, 2; Isokrates, *Epistulae* 9, 3). Sperthias and Boulis, who volunteered to atone for the murder of Darius' heralds, were noted as being of good family and among the first in wealth (Herodotus 7,

134). The privileged birth of certain other Spartiates is detectable in their connections, often hereditary, with nobles from other states.⁹ Thirdly, *personal merit*. Success in warfare, games, counsel and debate was always important among Greek aristocracies in establishing a man's ranking. Differences of personal ability were not only impossible to eradicate but were also brought into sharper relief in classical Sparta by the emphasis upon competition from the earliest years of the *agoge* right up to the contest for election to the *gerousia* (cf. Plut., *Ages.* 5, 5). Fourthly, *seniority*. This fundamental factor in Greek aristocratic society was enshrined in classical Sparta in the prominence of the *gerousia*, the complex system of age-classes and the deference or leadership habitually accorded to the eldest of any group (e.g. Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 12, 6; 13, 7; *Hellenika* 5, 3, 20).

II THE CONFLICT OF VALUES IN SPARTIATE INSTITUTIONS

I shall now examine the interplay between the influences surviving from the aristocratic period which emphasized distinctions among the *homoioi* and the newer, equalizing principles of the Spartiate way of life within three different areas of the social system: the upbringing, the common meals and the army. In doing so one must take account of the fact that it was not merely these two sets of values that were in opposition. The different aristocratic values were themselves mutually conflicting, since each, taken on its own, would have produced a different order of hierarchy within the citizen body. Similarly, the citizen organization of the *homoioi* was itself not free from contradictions, since the social and 'ritual' system required a hierarchy to run it.¹⁰ Leaders were also needed for the offices of ephors and *gerontes* and for various levels of command within the army. How these leaders were chosen will be the subject of the final part of this section.

*a The upbringing*¹¹

One of the most striking features of the Spartiate upbringing was the effort made to assert collective over private interests through disassociating the boys, especially those between 7 and 18/19 years of age, from their households. Not only were they kept away from home, but even in public the possibility of an exclusive relationship between father and son was prevented. According to Xenophon, 'Lykourgos [the mythical Spartan lawgiver] ... gave each man equal authority over his own children and those of others' (*Lak. Pol.* 6, 1; cf. Plut., *Lyk.* 15, 4; 17, 1). Alternative emotional relationships to the family were also provided in the form of institutionalized pederasty. One of the duties of the young adults, probably those aged 20–29, was to become the lovers (*erastai*) and surrogate fathers of the boys over 12.¹² These relationships were intended to be both close and enduring. The young adult *erastes* was

responsible for the conduct of his boy (*paidika* or *eromenos*), shared his honour or disgrace and, together with the latter's kinsfolk, supplied the material needs of his household (presumably after the latter had married). This continued until the *paidika* reached age 30 and was allowed to go to the market himself (Plut., *Lyk.* 18, 8–9; 25, 1). The relationship, consequently, cut across the marriage relationship of both partners. For the *erastes* it commenced precisely at the time when he became eligible to marry. Until he was 30 the *erastes* was probably able to spend more time with his *paidika* than with his wife. For the *paidika*, not only did his *erastes* initially supplant his father, but later, when he was married but not yet 30, it was not he who provided for his wife and children but his *erastes*. The other male groupings, the age-classes, the shared barrack life until age 30 and the common messes, also acted as counterweights to the household. In all this the collective interest was reinforced by the multiplicity of male groupings, each of which, as Finley has rightly said, was 'one more way of strengthening the structure as a whole against its individual parts'.¹³

The principles of uniformity and conformity were also evident in the upbringing. Aristotle (*Pol.* 1294b22–4) cites the uniform rearing and education of the boys of the rich and the poor as the first democratic feature of the Spartiate system. Even more revealing is the detailed attention paid to ensuring conformity among the *paides* (7–18/19 year olds), as Xenophon (*Lak. Pol.* 2, 10–11) records:

In order that the boys (*paides*) might never be without a ruler even if the *paidonomos* was away, he [Lykourgos] laid it down that any citizen who happened to be present had authority to instruct the boys to do whatever he thought right and to punish any misconduct. By this means he made the boys more respectful; in fact the boys and men alike respect their rulers about everything. In order that, even if no adult happened to be present, the boys might never be without a ruler, he put the keenest of the *eirens* in charge of each company (*ile*).¹⁴ Therefore the boys there are never without a ruler.

As this passage suggests, a range of different individuals or groups within the state had a role in ensuring that the boys conformed. Each *eiren* led a company of boys on a daily basis, controlling the provision of their food and commanding them in mock battles. He supervised them at the evening meal, making them serve him and putting them through tests and questioning after the meal (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 2, 5; Plut., *Lyk.* 17, 2–6; 18, 3–7). Apart from the *eirens*, other young adults in the 20–29 age-group (*hebontes*) had a role in controlling the boys. The *paidonomos*, who organized the upbringing, was given a group of *hebontes* as whip-bearers to provide floggings (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 2, 2). This was also the age-group from which the boys' *erastai* came. Apart from the formal hierarchy, we have seen that any adult could take control when necessary. In particular, the old men were expected to be present, egging

on the boys into fights, giving out praise or censure and observing each one's merits (Plut., *Lyk.* 16, 9; 17, 1; 25, 2–3).

This multiple supervision was also applied to the *hebontes* themselves. Besides being under the control of the *paidonomos*, they were subject to the scrutiny of three other adults, the *hippagretai*. The task of the *hippagretai* was to select the elite squad of 300 *hippeis* [literally 'knights', the royal bodyguard] from among the *hebontes*. The *hippeis* were subsequently under their command (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 4, 3; Hesychius, s.v. *hippagretas*; cf. Xen., *Hell.* 3, 3, 8–9).¹⁵ The *hippeis* could also be brought under control by more mature adults (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 4, 6) and no doubt the old men also kept an eye on them. Even the young girls exerted pressure towards conformity by playfully chiding wayward young men and singing the praise of worthy ones in the presence of the other citizens and the kings and *gerontes* during their ritual festival dances (Plut., *Lyk.* 14, 5–6).

The pressure towards conformity was reinforced, at least for the boys, by the use of corporal punishment, as has already been mentioned (cf. also Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 6, 2; Plut., *Lyk.* 17, 5–6). Furthermore, the effect of the multiple supervision of behaviour was intensified by the fact that those responsible for supervising might be under supervision themselves, as Plutarch (*Lyk.* 18, 6–7) informs us:

Often the eiren punished the boys in the presence of the old men and the magistrates, thus showing whether his punishments were reasonable and proper or not. While he was punishing them, he suffered no restraint, but after the boys were gone, he was brought to account if his punishments were harsher than necessary or, on the other hand, too mild and gentle.

This was 'the noblest of all lessons', as King Agesilaos is reputed to have told Xenophon (Plut., *Ages.* 20, 2), 'the lesson most studied at Sparta, how to rule and be ruled' (Plut., *Mor.* 215D).¹⁶ Note once again the role of the old men in supervising the eiren. With the eirens and *hebontes* guiding the boys, the *hippagretai* commanding the young men and the *paidonomos*, the old men and the rest of the citizens supervising everyone, it is evident that the enforcement of conformity imposed its own hierarchy based on the criterion of seniority.

Conformity was not always imposed from above. Plutarch (*Lyk.* 16, 8) tells us that from the earlier years of the upbringing outstanding individuals were chosen from among the boys themselves to command their contemporaries in each pack (*agela*). The rest of the boys had to obey the leader's order and submit to his punishments. The spirit of rivalry among contemporaries could also enforce conformity, as Xenophon (*Lak. Pol.* 4, 3–6) recounts, when describing the selection of the *hippeis* from among the *hebontes*.¹⁷

The ephors pick three men in their prime who are called *hippagretai*. Each of these selects 100 men, stating his reasons for choosing some and rejecting others. Those who do not achieve this honour are at odds with both those who rejected them and those chosen instead of them, and they keep a close

watch on one another for any lapse from the accepted standards of honour. ... each group strives separately to be always at its best, and if need arises, they individually protect the *polis* with all their might. They are compelled to keep themselves fit, for their strife leads to scuffles wherever they meet. But anyone present has the right to separate the combatants. If someone refuses to obey the mediator, the *paidonomos* takes him to the ephors; they punish him severely, wishing to ensure that his passion never becomes stronger than obedience to the laws.

This passage illustrates some of the tensions inherent in the Spartiates' system of values. The required standard of behaviour involved not just discipline but personal achievement. Achievement was one of the yardsticks by which one's standard of behaviour was measured. Conformity involved competition and rivalry for the good of the *polis*; but excessive rivalry was a threat to discipline and to the laws.

The rewarding of personal merit was obviously fundamental to the upbringing. It was 'the boy who excelled in judgement and was most courageous in fighting' who became the leader of his contemporaries in the *agela* (Plut., *Lyk.* 16, 8). It was the 'keenest of the eirens' who were given charge of the *ilai* of the boys (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 2, 11). Presumably the *hippagretai* had to use the merits of the candidates as their reasons for choosing some and rejecting others for the *hippeis*. A young Spartiate's personal merit was assessed and reassessed by means of continual tests and competitions such as trials of physical endurance (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 2, 9; Plut., *Lyk.* 18, 2), mock battles (Plut., *Lyk.* 16, 5; 17, 2; Pausanias 3, 14, 8–10) and questioning to discover whether he had internalized the Spartiate code of honour (Plut., *Lyk.* 18, 3–6). According to Agatharchides (ap. Athenaios 12, 550c; cf. Aelian, *Varia Historia* 14, 7) the ephors used to inspect the young men every ten days and observe their clothing and bedding every day. It is implicit in Xenophon's remarks upon the *hippeis* that there were possibilities of promotion and demotion depending upon one's subsequent performance. Presumably there was a periodic re-selection, perhaps annually when the *hippeis* who had reached age 30 had to stand down and the five eldest of them became *agathoergoi* for the following year. This continual reassessment must have been yet another influence strengthening the pressure towards conformity.

It is clear that the assessment of merit and choice of an elite marked a limit to the maintenance of uniformity. It seems that the selection of outstanding individuals during the upbringing, culminating in the choice of the *hippeis*, was also an important step in the process of choosing the next generation of political and military leaders. This appears to be demonstrated by the case of Sphodrias, who as harmost, or governor, at Thespias in Boiotia in 378 made an unauthorized attack upon the Peiraeus. He was brought to trial, but acquitted through the personal influence of King Agesilaos on grounds which Xenophon (*Hell.* 5, 4, 32) reports through the words of one of Agesilaos' friends, a certain

He says that it is impossible that Sphodrias is innocent; but, on the other hand, it is hard to put to death someone who as a boy, youth and young man has consistently performed all his duties, for Sparta needs such soldiers.

The three terms *pais*, *paidiskos* and *hebon* by which Etymokles describes the stages of Sphodrias' upbringing are especially significant because they are the same terms which Xenophon uses for young Spartiates in the three broad stages of their training described in *Lak. Pol.* 2–4, 6. Chapter two of that work deals with the *paides*, the boys in the first stage of the upbringing. At the start of chapter three (3, 1) he writes, ['When they depart from the *paides* into the *meirakia*']. The rest of chapter three then describes the second stage of the upbringing. Because of the phrase ['into the *meirakia*'] in the passage quoted above, several scholars have thought that Xenophon's term for youths undergoing this second stage was *meirakia*.¹⁸ Cobet, however, argued that this phrase should be deleted as a later addition, a view now supported by Tazelaar.¹⁹ The amended text of 3, 1 would accordingly translate simply as 'When they come out of the *paides*', and would consequently have no implications for Xenophon's use of terminology. Xenophon's term for youths in the second stage appears in fact at 3, 5 when he concludes his account of that stage as follows: 'such then was the care he bestowed upon the *paidiskoi*'. Both this sentence and the description of Sphodrias' upbringing in the *Hellenika* have been passed over in scholarly discussions of the age-classes, which often dismiss Xenophon's evidence as vague.²⁰ The occurrence of the words *paidiskos* and *paidiskoi* in the two passages demonstrates clearly, however, that this was Xenophon's consistent term for those in the second stage of the upbringing. In the first sentence of chapter four (4, 1) he continues, 'He took by far the greatest care of the *hebontes*', and proceeds to describe the third stage of the upbringing. In both the *Hellenika* and the *Lak. Pol.*, therefore, Xenophon uses the same successive terms *paides*, *paidiskoi* and *hebontes* for young Spartiates aged 7–29. This consistency and the use of these terms in the directly reported speech of a prominent Spartan lead me to suspect that they are drawn from technical Spartan terminology.²¹

In this light Etymokles' words about Sphodrias take on an added significance. Sphodrias appears to be a clear example of a man whose display of merit in the upbringing marked him out as someone fit for the important governorship of Thespiiai. His merit was certainly important enough for it to be used as a reason for his acquittal. At this point, however, one must ask precisely how Sphodrias gained his governorship. The answer is by the direct appointment of King Kleombrotos I (Xen., *Hell.* 5, 4, 15). One must also note that the friends of Kleombrotos, men who were members of the court which tried Sphodrias' case and were therefore either *gerontes* or ephors, are said to be the *hetairoi* ('comrades') of Sphodrias (ibid. 25), whatever precise connection that may signify.²² Seven years later, in 371, Sphodrias appears as a

tent-companion of Kleombrotos at the battle of Leuktra (ibid. 6, 4, 14). These revelations of Sphodrias' close connections with the king and other leading Spartiates should not necessarily lead us to doubt that his success in the upbringing was important in helping him to rise to his high command. It is possible that the king only developed his connections with Sphodrias because he had already proved his merit throughout his youth. But the king's role in the appointment suggests that merit on its own may not always have been sufficient and makes us look towards factors outside the upbringing which contributed to the formation of the political and military leadership.

The evidence suggests that most young Spartiates, however successful they may have been, would have had to wait some years after the end of the upbringing at age 30 before they gained a major post or command.²³ Sphodrias himself must have been 40 or over when he received his governorship in winter 379/8, since at the time of his trial his son, Kleonymos, had just come out of the *paides* (Xen., *Hell.* 5, 4, 25) and was therefore probably between his 18th and 19th birthdays.²⁴ There was consequently a gap of several years during which, on the principle of continual reassessment, young Spartiates would have to continue to demonstrate their worthiness for high positions. Even before the end of their upbringing, Spartiates were from the age of 20 members both of a *syssition* and of the army. Since their behaviour in both institutions is likely to have affected their prospects, it is these which I shall next examine.

*b The common meals (syssitia)*²⁵

The *syssition*, like the upbringing, was from one angle the embodiment of collective interests, uniformity and conformity. From a date sometime in the mid-fifth century members of each household and of the five Spartiate villages were split among the different *syssitia*. Before that date each *syssition* probably comprised members of the same village and it is not certain how members of each household were distributed.²⁶ In other respects, however, the nature of the *syssition* is likely to have been the same throughout the classical period. Each *syssition* comprised Spartiates of widely differing ages (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 5, 5), thus cutting across ties established in the age-classes.²⁷ The mixing of ages instilled conformity, as Xenophon indicated when he explained that its purpose was 'that the younger might learn from the experience of those older'. The food in the *syssitia* was the same for all, whether rich or poor (Arist., *Pol.* 129b25–7). Conversely, each member, regardless of wealth, was required to make an equal contribution of food (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 7, 3; Plut., *Lyk.* 12, 3; Dikaiarchos, ap. Athen. 4,141C). Initially each Spartiate household must have been given sufficient land to provide this contribution. By the late fifth and early fourth centuries, however, this strict uniformity was having harmful effects which undermined collective interests. Some Spartiates' holdings had become so reduced that they found it impossible to sustain the contribution.

Failure to do so meant that a man lost his citizen rights; many poor Spartiates thereby dropped out of the ranks of the *homoioi* and the number of Spartiates declined dramatically (Arist., *Pol.* 1270a15–b6; 1271a26–37; 1272a12–16; cf. 1330a6–8).²⁸

Even if one focusses solely upon those Spartiates who maintained their status, it can be seen that the procedures of the *syssitia* introduced distinctions among the *homoioi*. Young Spartiates of the requisite age were not distributed among the *syssitia* by lot. Each had to apply for membership of a particular mess. The existing members voted on his entry. If a single vote was cast against him, he was rejected (Plut., *Lyk.* 12, 9–11). This procedure obviously opened up possibilities for ensuring that the best young men were admitted to the more exclusive *syssitia*.²⁹ The decision concerning which young men should enter which *syssitia* may in practice have been determined before the formal vote. We know that youths under the age of 20, particularly the *paidiskoi*, attended the *syssitia* (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 3, 5; Plut., *Lyk.* 12, 6), though presumably not every day. During this period their suitability could be assessed. It is a pity that we are not better informed how it was decided which youths should attend which mess. One possibility is that a youth was normally introduced into the *syssition* of his *erastes*, as in fourth-century Crete.³⁰ This may be the implication of Xenophon's information that Kleonymos went to the mess to speak to his *erastes*, Archidamos, who was heir-apparent.³¹ If this were the case, it will have been possible to manipulate the future composition of the *syssition* through the judicious choice of *paidika*. Some historians have already argued that the choice of *paidika* may often have been politically motivated.³²

These considerations indicate that the *syssition* was probably a nucleus for political activity and the formation of attitudes, as Lewis has suggested.³³ Persaios (ap. Athen. 4,140F), writing in the third century B.C., called it 'a little polity'. According to Xenophon (*Lak. Pol.* 5, 6), 'the custom was for any citizen's honourable deeds to be recounted in the messes'. Plutarch mentions 'political discussions' (*Lyk.* 12, 6). Already in the boys' messes the *eirens* were accustomed to test the boys with questions such as 'Who is the best among the adults?' or 'What do you think of this man's conduct?' (ibid. 18, 3). It is not difficult to envisage how such conversation might take on a political dimension and aid the formation of political groupings.

It is important, therefore, to examine the character of social relationships within the *syssition*. The account of Persaios suggests that the *syssition* contained its own hierarchy, since he refers to certain persons being appointed to lie down in first or second place or to sit upon the couch (*skimpodion*).³⁴ The fact that younger members were supposed to be guided by their elders indicates that seniority in the *syssition* was as important as in the upbringing (cf. Plut., *Lyk.* 12, 8). Moreover, the fact of equal compulsory contributions did not eliminate the opportunities for rich or talented men to gain prestige by means of extra donations. The existence of this practice in the early fourth

century is attested by Xenophon, who notes that ‘many unexpected additions come from hunting and the rich in turn contribute wheat bread’ (*Lak. Pol.* 5, 3).³⁵ These extras were served after the main meal, according to several passages quoted by Athenaios (4,139B–141E) from writers later than Xenophon who elaborate upon his brief remarks. Sphairos (141C–D) states that the rich also contributed anything from their fields which the season permitted. Molpis (141D–E) comments that the huntsmen donated their spoils to give evidence of their prowess. He claims also that it was always the custom for one or more persons to supply a dish prepared in their own homes and that those who kept flocks of birds, fowl, hares, sheep or goats gave liberally of the offspring. This account is partly corroborated by Dikaiarchos, writing in the late fourth century B.C., who notes (141B–C) that a fish, hare, ring-dove or something similar might be added to the meal, although he does not specify by whom. At 140E Athenaios himself says that a dish prepared from certain animals was given by one or several of the rich members of the *syssition*. The way in which these extra donations were advertised is noteworthy. A passage attributed to Epicharmos (139B–C) informs us that ‘the attendant who accompanies the distributor of the meat announces the *aiklon* [the extra course], adding the name of the donor’. Molpis adds that the motive behind this was ‘that all may realize the labour spent upon the chase and the zeal manifested for themselves’ (141E).

Such displays of wealth or talent must have exalted certain members of a *syssition* above others. They must also have stimulated competition among members for a high place in the *syssition* hierarchy, not to mention competition between different *syssitia* over the quality and quantity of their extra donations. Since talent at hunting did not necessarily coincide with possession of wealth, their respective claims will have conflicted with each other, and both with claims to precedence based upon seniority. We shall shortly see that the claims of talent may also have conflicted with those of wealth and seniority because of the close connection of the *syssition* with the army.

c The army

There has been a great deal of controversy concerning the organization of the army in the classical period, complicated by the fact that it underwent at least one major reorganization at an unknown date in the mid-fifth century.³⁶ Fortunately, we can discern enough about its overall structure of command and its smallest fighting unit, the *enomotia*, to make some assessment of its influence upon Spartiate social relations.

The structure of the army cut across some of the pre-existing groupings of Spartiate society. Here it is necessary to distinguish between the army of the early fifth century, known as the obal army, and that of the late fifth century and after.³⁷ The obal army was organized according to the five obes or villages

which each furnished one regiment for the army. Members of the same village consequently fought in the same regiment. How they were organized into smaller units within the regiment, in particular whether members of each family were grouped together or separated at the level of the *enomotia*, is not known. It is reasonably certain, however, that the composition of each *enomotia* cut across the age-classes, containing (theoretically, at least) one man out of every age-class from ages 20 to 59.³⁸ In practice probably only those aged 20–44 were normally called up. In the later army the age-structure of the *enomotiai* was the same, except that the normal levy included those aged 20–54. The main difference in the organization of the later army was that the members of each regiment no longer came from a single village. In 390 the men from Amyklai, one of the villages, were spread across the different regiments (Xen., *Hell.* 4, 5, 11). Furthermore, the army also separated family members into the different regiments. When the troops of one regiment suffered a disaster at Lechaion in the same year, Xenophon (ibid. 10) reveals that they had sons, fathers and brothers in the other regiments who were either distressed or jubilant over their relatives' fate.

Both before and after its reorganization the Lakedaimonian army shared some characteristics common to hoplite armies throughout the Greek world. In other respects it was far from typical, principally because the Spartiates' full-time hoplite status engendered a professionalism in their approach to almost all aspects of warfare lacking in other states.³⁹ Many of the values and influences pertaining to the nature of hoplite warfare in general were in the Lakedaimonian army particularly intensified. This is evidence immediately in regard to what might be called the 'egalitarian' tendencies of hoplite warfare. Among the Spartiates, though not among the *perioikoi* who also fought in the army, preparation for hoplite warfare was, as we have seen, achieved through a uniform training from age 7 onwards possessed by no other Greek *polis*. Since their armour and weapons were probably supplied by the state, they were more uniform than those of other armies. All hoplites, regardless of rank, were also required to wear the standard short red cloak and hair grown long specially for the occasion.⁴⁰ Fighting in all hoplite phalanxes required disciplined cohesion and strict adherence to uniform behaviour in order to retain an unbroken barrier of shields for the good of the whole army. Within the Lakedaimonian army, however, conformity to this discipline was enforced in its most extreme form. In contrast with their opponents the Lakedaimonians advanced into battle to the accompaniment of flutes in a slow, steady rhythm which enabled them to keep in step and avoid breaking rank.⁴¹ Aristodemos, who rushed forward from the ranks with the fury of a madman and died fighting magnificently at Plataia in 479, was, nevertheless, denied any public honours (Hdt. 9, 71). The penalties for abandoning one's shield and particularly for deserting one's rank and fleeing were more severe than elsewhere.⁴²

Once again, however, things were not quite as equal as they might seem. In the first place, the army had its own elite, the 300 *hippeis*, who fought as a

group around the king.⁴³ Secondly, although information is lacking for the obol army, the later Lakedaimonian army, as described by Thucydides (5, 66, 3–4) before the battle of Mantinea in 418, had a remarkably stratified hierarchy for a hoplite force.⁴⁴

When a king is leading the army, everything is governed by him, and he personally issues the necessary orders to the *polemarchoi*, they to the *lochagoi* [‘captains’], they to the *pentekonteres* [‘commanders of 50 men’], they again to the *enomotarchoi* [‘unit commanders’] and they to their *enomotia* ... for almost the whole army of the Lakedaimonians, except for a small part, consists of officers commanding subordinate officers and the executive responsibility is shared by many.⁴⁵

Here we see the chain of command through which an aspiring Spartiate would have to pass to reach the highest available office in the traditional Lakedaimonian army, that of *polemarchos*. Here we also see in operation the principles of multiple supervision and ‘rule and be ruled’ which were evident in the upbringing. It is interesting that, although Thucydides’ remarks start by emphasizing the complete authority of the king, his final comment stresses the division of responsibility throughout the army which the stratified hierarchy produced. He also notes that each *lochagos* had some discretion concerning the depth of the phalanx in his part of the line (Thuc. 5, 68, 3).

The *enomotia*, at the bottom of the chain of command described by Thucydides, had its own internal hierarchy. This arose out of the sophisticated Lakedaimonian drilling organization possessed by no other contemporary army.

At the word of command, they are drawn up from these regiments, with the *enomotiai* sometimes in ... file,⁴⁶ sometimes in threes, sometimes in sixes. The common opinion that the Lakonian hoplite drill is most complicated is the very reverse of the truth; for in the Lakonian drill the front-rank men are officers (*archontes*) and each file is a self-contained unit.⁴⁷ The formation is so easy to learn that nobody who can recognize men could make a mistake; for it is given to some to lead and the others are ordered to follow (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 11, 4–5).

This passage indicates that within each *enomotia* there were six men who each led a file when the *enomotia* was lined up six abreast. These six men were obviously themselves hierarchically ordered so that it would be known who would lead the files when the *enomotia* was lined up fewer than six abreast. These six were the officers, the others in the *enomotia* were ordered to follow. Who were these officers? Obviously the *enomotarchoi* and higher officers fighting at the head of their units would take precedence.⁴⁸ Otherwise, the officers were the best soldiers, *hoi kratistoi*, mentioned in *Lak. Pol.* 11, 8 whom the Lakedaimonians considered so important that they devised a special

counter-marching drill in order that these men should still be in the front rank even if the enemy appeared at the rear when they were marching in column (ibid. 8–9). This distinction between officers and followers according to fighting ability applied in every *enomotia* in the army and therefore throughout the entire body of citizens in the ranks. The precise information provided by Xenophon relates to the late classical army, but probably the obal army also possessed a similar drilling organization and a similar hierarchy.⁴⁹

This basic hierarchy was not limited to times when the army was assembled because it seems certain that the men who dined together in the *syssitia* also fought together in the *enomotiai*.⁵⁰ The distinction according to fighting ability will consequently have been one more conflicting influence, along with those of seniority, wealth and talent at hunting, in the competition for precedence in the *syssition*.⁵¹ It is true that, since in the obal army men over 44 and in the later army men over 54 rarely fought in the ranks, they will have remained largely outside the division into officers and followers. Nevertheless, memories of their past ranking within the *enomotia* may have influenced the extent of their prestige as senior members of the *syssition*.⁵²

A final issue relating to hierarchies embedded in the army structure concerns the position in which each *enomotia*, and therefore each *syssition*, was placed within the phalanx. This question is too complex for a complete discussion here, but it would seem likely that positions on the right wing and near to the king would be more prestigious than those elsewhere. How was it decided, first, which regiments should have the more prestigious positions,⁵³ and, secondly, which *enomotiai* should be assigned to which regiments? Could those *enomotiai* which contained the more exclusive *syssitia* somehow obtain the more prestigious positions?

Elitism within the phalanx did not necessarily arise only out of the army structure. Despite the levelling influences discussed above, it was still possible within the ranks of any Greek hoplite phalanx to achieve individual glory and the Lakedaimonian phalanx was no exception.⁵⁴ Citizens who died in battle for the collective good were given the privilege denied to other Spartiates of having their names inscribed on their tombstones.⁵⁵ Spartan songs were mainly praises of men who had died for the *polis* (Plut., *Lyk.* 21, 2). Some who had shown exceptional bravery were given even greater honours, occasionally extending even to heroization.⁵⁶ Dead warriors also brought prestige to their relatives and *erastai*. After the defeat at Lechaion the relatives of the dead went about ‘like prizewinners’ (*Hell.* 4, 5, 10). That comparison is revealing about Spartiate mentality, evoking as it does the atmosphere of a contest. The relatives of the dead at Leuktra in 371 acted in a similarly joyful manner (ibid. 6, 4, 16; Plut., *Ages.* 29, 5–7).⁵⁷ The noble death of Kleonymos in the same battle brought honour to his *erastes*, Archidamos (Xen., *Hell.* 5, 4, 33).

There were also rewards for the warrior who performed outstanding deeds and survived. His deeds were not only talked about in the *syssitia*, but might also be officially commended. Brasidas, who saved the town of Methone in S.

W. Messenia from the Athenians in 431 when in command of a small detachment of troops, became the first person during the Peloponnesian war to be commended by the state (Thuc. 2, 25, 2). Thucydides' words imply that other Spartiates later received this honour.⁵⁸ Isidas received a wreath for his personal exploits in defence of Sparta in 362 (Plut., *Ages.* 34, 8–11; Aelian, *VH* 6, 3; cf. Polyainos 2, 9). In the same year Antikrates, the man who killed Epaminondas in the battle of Mantinea, was voted honours, gifts and exemption from taxes for his descendants (Plut., *Ages.* 35, 1–2). The rewarding of personal merit in the upbringing was thus continued into the lives of adults in the army.⁵⁹

d Promotion to high office

Military distinction could lead to promotion to higher posts. The most outstanding case would appear to be the career of Brasidas. Shortly after his exploit at Methone and official commendation he was elected eponymous ephor [the magistrate who gave his name to the year] for the year 431/0, presumably on the strength of his prestige.⁶⁰ In 429 he was sent as the second of three advisers to the undistinguished *nauarchos*, or admiral, Knemos (Thuc. 2, 85, 1). In 427 he was sent as sole adviser to the even more incompetent *nauarchos*, Alkidas (ibid. 3, 69, 1). In 425 he was in command of a trireme in the fleet making an assault on the Athenians at Pylos, again distinguishing himself in the action (ibid. 4, 11, 4–12, 1; Diodorus 12, 62). Then in 424 he was given the major command in Thrace which lasted until his death in 422 (Thuc. 4, 70–5, 11 *passim*). At the time of his appointment to this command Thucydides records that he was 'a man who in Sparta had a reputation for being energetic in everything' (ibid. 4, 81, 1).

The case of Brasidas, like that of Sphodrias, would seem to be an excellent illustration of the significance attached to personal merit in the choice of Spartiate leaders.⁶¹ His advancement was, however, rather cautious and gradual, and after 431 it took place, as far as we are informed, outside the normal ranks of the army. (We know nothing of his place within the Lakedaimonian phalanx.) He was chosen for the Thracian campaign more because it was his own wish and because the Chalkidians wanted him than through the positive choice of the Spartiates. An examination of the careers of other Spartiate leaders in the Peloponnesian war suggests that Brasidas' advancement may not have been typical.

The clearest example is that of the *nauarchos* Alkidas. It hardly seems likely that Alkidas was appointed for displaying the same sort of merit as Brasidas since his performance as *nauarchos* (Thuc. 3, 26–33, 69–81) was so lacking in distinction. His fleet was despatched in spring 427 to bring help to Mytilene. The fleet dawdled on the journey and failed to arrive before Mytilene's revolt had been ended. Rejecting alternative strategems for harming Athenian interests in eastern Greece, Alkidas retreated hastily to the Peloponnese in fear

of pursuit. It was then that Brasidas was sent to direct him to Kerkyra. In the ensuing operations Alkidas this time had to commit his fleet to battle. It was partly victorious but, overruling Brasidas' advice, Alkidas failed to follow this up by attacking the town of Kerkyra and the episode concluded with another hasty and ignominious retreat as a large Athenian fleet approached. This was not the only time in Spartan history when a man of ability was thwarted by someone with a superior constitutional position.⁶² Alkidas' career has an interesting sequel. His poor performance must have been noted in Sparta for Brasidas to have been sent out as adviser and upon his return Brasidas is likely to have made an unfavourable report. Nevertheless, in the following year Alkidas was chosen as one of the founders of the colony of Herakleia Trachinia (Thuc. 3, 92, 5). A few years later there is another example of the reappointment of a failed commander. In summer 419 Agesippidas, a later harmost (governor) at Herakleia, was expelled by the Boiotians for misgovernment (ibid. 5, 52, 1).⁶³ Within a few months he was given command in winter 419/8 of the garrison installed at Epidauros (ibid. 56, 1).

It seems that merit was only one of the factors which could influence a man's career. Considering the paucity of our information about individual Spartiate magistrates, commanders and ambassadors, it is remarkable how many examples there are of members of the same lineage holding high positions in different, often successive, generations.⁶⁴ In particular, several men who were prominent immediately before or during the Archidamian war had sons who gained important posts during the Ionian war or soon afterwards.⁶⁵ Sthenelaidas (P 664), ephor in 432, was the father of Alkamenes (P 57), who was selected by King Agis for a governorship in 413/2. Sthenelaos (P 665), whom Lysander appointed harmost of Byzantion and Chalkedon in 405, may have been another son of Sthenelaidas.⁶⁶ Ramphias (P 654), who was diplomat in winter 432/1 and commander in 422, was the father of Klearchos (P 425), who exercised important commands in the Ionian war from 412 onwards. This family had foreign connections, since Klearchos was *proxenos* of the Byzantines (see n. 9 above). The fact that he was twice appointed harmost of Byzantion was surely influenced by his proxy. One of Ramphias' colleagues as diplomat in winter 432/1 was Agesandros (P 6), whose son, Agesandridas (P 5), was also a commander during the Ionian war. If, as Poralla suggests, this Agesandros is the same man as the Hegesandros mentioned elsewhere by Thucydides (4, 132, 3), he had another son who had already achieved high command, Pasitelidas (P 592), who became harmost of Torone while still a *hebon*. Another example, though more complex, is that involving Pedaritos (P 599), the harmost of Chios in 412, and Antalkidas (P 97), who was four times envoy to Persia, *nauarchos* and ephor in the early fourth century.⁶⁷ Both had a father named Leon. Leon is also the name (P 482) of an Olympic victor of 440 or 424, a founder of Herakleia in 426, an envoy to Athens in 420, an ephor of 419/8 and the successor to Pedaritos at Chios. It is probably excessive to believe that these were all the same man. Antalkidas is likely to have been the son of

the Olympic victor, who was probably also the founder of Herakleia. Pedaritos may well have been either the brother of Antalkidas or the son of one of the other Leons (with the exception of his successor at Chios). The fact that Pedaritos achieved high command is interesting because, according to Plutarch (*Lyk.* 25, 6; *Mor.* 191F; 231B), he once failed to be selected among the 300 *bippeis*. He was, however, well-born, according to Harpokration (s.v.). It is possible that even Brasidas' advancement depended partly upon hereditary factors. It may be unwise to draw a conclusion about his family's social status solely from the appearance of his father, Tellis, on the board of ten Spartiates who negotiated the peace of Nikias and subsequent alliance with Athens in 421.⁶⁸ One's suspicions are, however, aroused by the fact that Brasidas had friends in Pharsalos in Thessaly in 424 (*ibid.* 4, 78, 1. 4).

One important reason for this pattern of office-holding was the fact, as Finley has pointed out, that the primary principles used for selecting leaders both in the upbringing and later were those of appointment and co-optation, never selection by lot and, apart from the ephorate and *gerousia*, not even election in open competition.⁶⁹ Even in those cases, such as the choice of envoys, *nauarchoi* and some of the harmosts just mentioned, when the final selection may have been made in the assembly, there will have been no open competition, at the most only a decision among a short-list of nominated candidates. Often only a single nominee may have been put forward for ratification, as when Agis proposed that Klearchos should be sent as harmost to Byzantion (*Xen., Hell.* 1, 1, 35–6). Often harmosts, in particular, were selected without reference to the government at Sparta, as is shown by Agis' choice of Alkamenes and Lysander's of Sthenelaos, not forgetting Kleombrotos' appointment of Sphodrias. The primacy of appointment and co-optation obviously provided opportunities for the dispensation of patronage. Kings in command of armies were in an exceptional position to do so; but so also, though less consistently, could *nauarchoi* and other commanders, and even ephors, such as those who gained Anaxibios his governorship of Abydos in 389 (*Xen., Hell.* 4, 8, 32). Within the traditional army hierarchy leading officers, such as the *polemarchoi*, could no doubt influence the appointment of lower ranking officers.

Patronage probably exercised a profound influence upon Spartan society. As usual, most of the evidence comes from Xenophon and therefore concerns King Agesilaos, who built up his following by means of calculated generosity (*Xen., Ages.* 4–5, 1; 11, 8; *Plut., Ages.* 4, 5; *Mor.* 482D). He took pleasure in being accessible to all and in granting the requests of all his suitors, both friends and enemies (*Xen., Ages.* 8, 1; 9, 1–2; cf. 1, 17–18; *Plut., Ages.* 5, 1–4; 20, 6). When describing Archidamos' efforts to persuade Agesilaos, his father, to acquit Sphodrias, Xenophon depicts a seemingly typical day in the life of the king when he went down to the river Eurotas and made himself available to speak first with any Spartan, then with any foreigner and finally with any servant (*Hell.* 5, 4, 28). Agesilaos, however, was not the only person who

dispensed such patronage, as is evident from what Archidamos had earlier told Sphodrias: 'If I want to get something done in the *polis*, I go with my request to anyone rather than my father' (ibid. 27). Sparta then was a place where those with influence arranged things upon request.

Patronage might of course sometimes raise a promising young Spartiate from an ordinary background to a high position and thus preserve some level of social mobility within the society. What influential men could do for potential supporters, however, they could also do for their own younger relatives. Finley has already suggested 'that there were families who were able to influence the appointment procedures in favour of their own members, beginning at the first opportunity, among the children'.⁷⁰ There was probably scope for favouritism even in the assessment of an individual's abilities. The system was one in which the current generation of political leaders chose the men who were going to replace them. In this context it is perfectly intelligible that Aristotle should have characterized the election of the *gerontes* as *dynasteutike* ('favouring the interests of a narrow range of families').⁷¹ Although there was fierce rivalry for vacancies to the *gerousia* (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 10, 1–3; Plut., *Lyk.* 26), it will surely have been mostly among men from distinguished lineages who had already held major positions in their earlier careers (cf. Arist., *Pol.* 1270b24). It seems therefore that these distinguished lineages were able to turn to their own advantage all the factors which contributed towards establishing an order of precedence among Spartiates. High birth and wealth were inherited. Seniority was controlled through their monopoly of the *gerousia* and merit through manipulation of the appointment procedures. Only the ephorate continued to be open to a majority of poor Spartiates (Arist., *Pol.* 1270b7–10; 1272a27–33).

None of this should really surprise us for, despite the various devices to distract Spartiates from the interests of the household, they still remained strong, rooted in a system of private land tenure and inheritance. As Redfield has noted, the Spartan polity, including the upbringing and the Spartiate way of life, was 'a superstructure built on the normal Greek sub-structure ... of private property' based upon the household.⁷² A revealing comment by Xenophon links the household's interest in property, inheritance and power, when he is explaining why Spartiate men were in favour of certain wife-sharing arrangements which were encouraged by the state (*Lak. Pol.* 1, 7–9; Plut., *Lyk.* 15, 11–13; *Mor.* 242B). At first glance these might seem to have been another set of relationships cutting across those of the household; but Xenophon explains that 'the men want to get brothers for their sons, brothers who are part of the kin and share in its power, but claim no part of its property' (*Lak. Pol.* 1, 9). Wife-sharing consequently extended the household's sphere of relationships; and so probably did institutionalized pederasty, which brought the *erastes* into a relationship with the kin of his *paidika*, and with the latter's household, when they jointly provided its material needs. Xenophon's casual assumption in the passage quoted above that a prime concern of a

Spartiate was to increase the size and power of his household and preserve its property is a measure of the influence which the household retained.

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1 The following abbreviations have been used for modern works cited frequently: Busolt-Swoboda = G. Busolt and H. Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde*³ II, Munich 1926; Cartledge, *Sparta* = P. Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History 1300–362 B.C.*, London 1979; De Ste Croix = G. E. M. de Ste Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, London 1972; HCT = A. W. Gomme, A. Andrewes and K. J. Dover, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, Oxford 1944–81; Lewis = D. M. Lewis, *Sparta and Persia*, Leiden 1977; Tazelaar = C. M. Tazelaar, ΠΑΙΔΕΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΦΗΒΟΙ. Some notes on the Spartan stages of youth', *Mnemosyne*⁴ 20, 1967, 127 ff. For references to ancient sources I have used standard abbreviations, except that on the first appearance of a source in the text I have generally given a full citation.

2 The earliest evidence for the number of Spartiates is Hdt. 7.234, according to which there were about 8000 in the year 480. Most historians accept that there must have been some distribution of land in order to provide each citizen with the necessary economic basis for being a full-time hoplite, e.g. Cartledge, *Sparta* 168.

3 For the different stages of the Spartiate upbringing in the following paragraph, I have followed the most satisfactory scheme advocated to date, that of Tazelaar, who discusses and gives references to previous studies. I have supplemented Tazelaar's account with direct references to the ancient sources, including Plutarch's *Life of Lykourgos*, which occasionally both here and elsewhere in this article provides our sole evidence. On the intractable problems posed by this work as a historical source, see recently E. N. Tigerstedt, *The Legend of Sparta in Classical Antiquity* II, Uppsala 1974, esp. 77 ff., 89 ff., 231 ff., with discussion of older studies; L. Piccirilli, 'Cronologia Relativa e Fonti delle *Vitae Lycurgi et Numae* di Plutarco', in: (φιλικὰς χάριν. *Miscellanea di Studi Classici in Onore di Eugenio Manni* V, Rome 1980, 1753 ff.; Id., in [M. Manfredini and L. Piccirilli (eds), *Plutarco: Le Vite di Licurgo e di Numa*, Milan, 1980], esp. XL ff. As these studies indicate, it is rarely possible to discern the source, and therefore the reliability, of information which is original to the work, except when it derives from the excerpts of the *Apophthegmata Lycurgi* = *Moralia* 225F–229A (in which case it is suspect because of the taint of third century revolutionary propaganda) or when Plutarch names his authority. When neither of these circumstances applies, as is generally the case with the original Plutarchean information used in this study, rather than decline to consider the information, it seems better to attempt to make cautious use of it with due regard to its general degree of plausibility and its consonance with any other adjacent evidence. I have attempted to follow the same procedure with other late sources whose reliability is uncertain.

4 The term applied to youths of this age-group was probably *paidiskoi*; see section *Ila* below.

5 M. E. White, *JHS* 84, 1964, 140 ff. claims, at 142 n. 11, that Plut., *Lyk.* 25, which states that Spartiates under 30 could not enter the market-place to purchase items needed for the household, proves that such young men were not allowed to marry and establish a household. This goes beyond the text which proves only that such necessities were provided by others. The clear implication of Plut., *Lyk.* 15, 2–3 and *Mor.* 228A is that Spartiates could marry at a time when they still slept at night in the barracks and were therefore under the age of 30.

6 Cf. the comments of Perikles (Thuc. 2, 37, 2) that the Athenians did not interfere in one another's private lives, obviously directed against the opposite practice of the Spartiates. On the all-pervasive sanctions in Spartiate life, see Lewis 30 f., with refs.

7 For ancient testimony to the term, Busolt-Swoboda 659 n. 4.

8 On differences in wealth and growing inequalities, cf. the evidence collected by De Ste Croix 137 f. [= Chapter 3 above, pp. 76–7] and Appendix XVI. The wealthiest men were the kings (Ps.–Plato, *Alk.* I 122C–123A; cf. Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 15, 3).

9 Leaving aside the numerous guest friendships of Spartan kings or regents, note Thucydides' reference to the friends of the Boiotians and Corinthians (5, 37, 1. 3–4. 38, 3). The clearest example, however, is the hereditary friendship between the lineages of the Spartiate Endios and the Athenian Alkibiades mentioned by Thucydides (8, 6, 3). Since the Athenian line age received the name Alkibiades from the Spartiate lineage, this friendship must go back at least to 550 or even earlier, the time when the earliest known Athenian Alkibiades, attested by Isokrates (16.25), received his name (J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families 600–300 B.C.*, Oxford 1971, 12 and 15 f.). The inscription IG ¹² p. 272, 90, a dedication to Apollo at Delphi (525–500?), possibly for a chariot-race victory, which was also thought to

attest to this Alkibiades, is now realized to be Lakonian (G. Daux, in: *Études Delphiques*, BCH Suppl. IV, Paris 1977, 51 ff.). Daux now restores the name of the dedicator as Alkibiadas. He is therefore possibly an ancestor of Endios.

Cf. the proxenies held by certain Spartiates, listed in D. J. Mosley, 'Spartan Kings and Proxeny', *Athenaeum* N. S. 49, 1971, 433 ff. A *proxenos* was someone chosen by another state to help look after its interests and the welfare of its citizens in his own *polis*. Mosley suggests that the prerogative of Sparta's kings to appoint *proxenoi* (Hdt. 6, 57) was to supplement and not to take the place of arrangements made by other states. Cf. also Spartiates with names suggesting foreign links. P. Poralla, *Prosopographie der Lakedaemonier bis auf die Zeit Alexanders des Großen*, Breslau 1913, nos. 32, 47, 141, 175, 367, 490, 658, 659, 743. In some of these cases the link is independently attested by other evidence.

10 [M. I. Finley, 'Sparta and Spartan Society', in his *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece*, London, 1981, 25–40, 253–5,] 28.

11 The main modern accounts are M. P. Nilsson, 'Die Grundlagen des spartanischen Lebens', *Klio* 12, 1912, 308 ff.; Busolt-Swoboda, 694 ff.; H. Jeanmaire, *Couroi et Courètes*, Lille 1939, 419 ff.; W. Den Boer, *Laconian Studies*, Amsterdam 1954, 233 ff.; H. Michell, [*Sparta*, Cambridge, 1952,] 165 ff.; H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité*⁶, Paris 1965 [= *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. G. Lamb, New York, 1964], 45 ff.; A. Brelich, *Paides e Partbenoi* I, Rome 1969, 113 ff., A. Toynbee, *Some Problems, of Greek History*, London 1969, 317 ff. I have omitted works which deal only with the nomenclature of the age-classes.

12 Plut., *Lyk.* 17, 1; Aelian, *Varia Historia* 3, 10, 2. On Spartan pederasty, see recently P. Cartledge, 'The politics of Spartan pederasty', *PCPS* N.S. 27, 1981, 17 ff., with references to earlier studies. Both Plutarch and Aelian appear to claim that only young men who were 'reputable' (Plutarch) or 'fine and upstanding' (Aelian) could become *erastai*. Aelian adds that only boys 'of fine character' received *erastai*. Cartledge, on the contrary, argues cogently (21 f.) that the relationship was compulsory for every young man and boy. Plutarch's statement may in fact support this view. If one were to accept the suggestion of Den Boer, op. cit. 284 ff., that the word Plutarch uses (*eudokimos*) means in effect 'one who has passed the tests of the *agoge*', it would follow that Plutarch intends to signify that all those who had successfully reached the status of young Spartiates became *erastai*, not just the better sort. I agree with Den Boer (246, 286) that Plutarch's *eudokimoi neoi* ['reputable youths'] refers to the young men, not to the boys as Cartledge (21) suggests.

13 Op. cit. 29.

14 Xenophon's failure to explain the terms *eiren* and *ile* has given rise to two controversies. 1) *Eiren*: I agree with the view of Tazelaar (142 f.) that *eiren* refers to a young adult not less than 20 years, and possibly up to the age of 30. For the contrary view that he might be younger than 20, cf. Nilsson, op. cit. [n. 11] 309 ff.; Busolt-Swoboda 696 n. 3; H.-I.-Marrou, *REA* 48, 1946, 216 ff.; A. Billheimer, *TAPhA* 78, 1947, 99 ff.; Toynbee, op. cit. [n. 11] 318 n. 4. 2) *Ile*: I agree with Nilsson 312 ff.; Jeanmaire, op. cit. 504; Toynbee 320 that the *He* is the larger grouping of boys led by an *eiren* and subdivided into *agelai* led by some of the *paides* themselves. The combined evidence of the above passage, Plut., *Lyk.* 16, 7–8 and Hesychius, s.v. *bouagor* is sufficient proof. To judge from the last passage cited, plus Hesychius, s.v. *boua*, the *boua* seems to have been the same unit as the *agela*, not the *agela* subdivided into age-classes, especially since Plut., *Lyk.* 16, 7 suggests that the *agela* itself comprised only a single age-class, and in fact that there were several *agelai* to each age-class.

15 It is uncertain whether the *hippagretai* had any subsequent responsibility for those who were not selected for the *hippeis*. It is normally thought that the *neoterai* and *neoi* of Xen., *Hell.* 3, 3, 8–9 refer solely to the *hippeis* (e.g. L. Pareti, 'Origini e sviluppo dell'eforato spartano', *Studi minori di Storia antica* I, Rome 1958, 101 ff., at 156 f.; Busolt-Swoboda 706 and n. 4). V. Cozzoli, *Proprietà fondiaria ed esercito nello stato spartano dell'età classica*, Rome 1979, 95 ff. argues, however, that they should be equated solely with the *neoterai* of Thuc. 5, 64, 3. 75.1. These latter are normally thought to be 18 and 19 year olds (e.g. A. J. Toynbee, 'The growth of Sparta', *JHS* 33, 1913, 246 ff., at 263; *HCT* IV 93; Tazelaar 148). Cozzoli's view is bound up with his unacceptable opinion that the *hippeis* comprised Spartiates of all ages between 20 and 60 (see n. 17 below) and is too extreme; but it is not entirely without merit. If they had responsibility only for the *hippeis*, how were the *hippagretai* able to state reasons for choosing some and rejecting others (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 4, 4) when they had made their selection out of all the 20–29 year olds, including those who had only just reached age 20?

16 Cf. Xen., *Ages.* 2, 16; *Anab.* 1, 3, 15; but note *ibid.* 2, 6, 15. See the illuminating remarks of [J. Redfield, 'The Women of Sparta', *Classical Journal* 73, 1977/78, 146–61,] 154.

17 Cozzoli, op. cit. [n. 15,] 86 believes that the *hippeis* comprised not just *hebonτες* but men up to the maximum age for military service, i.e. age 60. He argues this on the basis of Hdt. 1, 67, which states that the five eldest men who retired from the *hippeis* each year became *agathoergoi*, men who spent the

subsequent year in special service of the state in whatever employment was required of them. Cozzoli's view, however, is unacceptable, since there is nothing in Herodotus' account or elsewhere to suggest that the *agathoergoi* were aged 60 rather than 30, as is normally thought. It runs counter to the careful sequence of *Lak. Pol.* 2–5, 1 in which Xenophon describes separately the institutional arrangements peculiar to each age-group and which he concludes with the statement that now he will describe those arrangements which applied to everyone. Cozzoli's view also compels him to argue that the purpose of the selection process described by Xenophon was to choose not the entire squad of *hippeis* but only those places which had become available through retirements (he accepts that his choice was made among only the *hebontes*). This contradicts Xenophon's clear statement that each of the *hippagretai* chose 100 men.

18 E.g. F. Oiler, *Xénophon, La République des Lacédémoniens*, Lyon 1934, 32; A. Diller, *AJP* 62, 1941, 499 ff., at 501; Marrou, op. cit. (n. 11) 217; Brelich, op. cit. (n. 11) 119.

19 C. G. Cobet, *Novae Lectiones*, Lugdunum Batavorum 1868, 728; Tazelaar 147.

20 E.g. Marrou, op. cit. 217; Den Boer, op. cit. (n. 11) 260. Even Tazelaar fails to notice both pieces of evidence. Den Boer, alone among scholars to my knowledge, noticed the sentence in the *Lak. Pol.*, But he drew the erroneous conclusion that the term *paidiskoi* referred jointly to both the *paides* in the first stage and those in the second stage. He did not notice the passage in the *Hellenika*.

21 My suspicion is strengthened by the recent emendation to *IG V* 1, 213 suggested by G. S. Schwartz, *ZPE* 22, 1976, 177 f. In line 39 he restores *kai hebon* in place of Woodward's earlier restoration *kai ephebon*. Xenophon often uses technical Spartan terms without properly explaining their meaning, e.g. *eirens*, *hypomeiones* (*Hell.* 3, 3, 6), *syntetagmenoi* (*ibid.* 7) and *mikra ekklesia* ['little assembly':] *ibid.* 8).

22 On the composition of courts which tried major cases, see recently De Ste Croix 132 ff. [= Chapter 3 above] with Appendix XXVI; but cf. Lewis 39.

23 Lysander, if he was the *erastes* of Agesilaos (Plut., *Lys.* 22, 6; *Ages.* 2, 1), will have been 40 or over when he became *nauarchos* in 408 or 407, since he must have been at least 8 years older than Agesilaos, who himself was born probably in 444 (Plut., *Ages.* 40, 3) and certainly no later than 439 (Xen., *Hell.* 5, 4, 13; Plut., *Ages.* 24, 3). Klearchos, who was about 50 when he was killed in 401 (Xen., *Anab.* 2, 6, 15), will have been about 39 when he was appointed to his command in the Hellespont in 412 (Thuc. 8, 8, 2). If Klearchos was born c.451, his father, Ramphias, will have been over 40 when he makes his first appearance in the historical record as an envoy to Athens in 432/1 (*ibid.* 1, 139, 3). Antalkidas was perhaps 34 or 35 when he was envoy to Tiribazos in 392/1 (Xen., *Hell.* 4, 8, 12–16; D. Whitehead, *LCM* 4, 1979, 191 ff., at 193). Thucydides (4, 132, 3) stresses how exceptional were the appointments of Klearidas and Pasitelidas as harmosts of Amphipolis and Torone in 423 at a time when they were still *hebontes*. I am not sure how reliable is Diodorus' claim (13, 76, 2) that Kallikratidas was a *neos* ['young man'] when he became *nauarchos* in 407 or 406.

24 The reasons for placing the transition out of the *paides* at this age are given by Tazelaar 139 f. and 147 f. Note also that Xenophon calls Kleonymos *eudokimotatos* ['most reputable'] (see n. 12 above).

25 See esp. A. Bielschowsky, *De Spartanorum Syssitiis*, Berlin 1869; Nilsson, op. cit. (n. 11) 315 ff.; Busolt-Swoboda 698 ff.; Michell, op. cit. (n. 11) 281 ff.

26 This difference in composition was related to the reorganization of the Lakedaimonian army; see section *IIc* below.

27 The spread of ages was demanded by the nature of the Lakedaimonian phalanx both before and after the mid-fifth century army reorganization.

28 On the Spartiate manpower decline (*oliganthropia*) see recently Toynbee, op. cit. (n. 11) 297 ff.; De Ste Croix 331 f.; Cartledge, *Sparta* 307 ff.; [W. G. Forrest, *A History of Sparta 950–192 B.C.*, London, 1968] 131 ff.

29 In addition the kings had their own *syssition* in which they dined together. Each king had the right to choose two mess companions called Pythioi who conducted Sparta's relations with Delphi (Hdt. 6, 57; Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 15, 5). It is not certain whether the three tent-companions of a king on campaign (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 13, 1) also messed with him at home. The six *polemarchoi* ['military commanders'] would appear to have done so, if the evidence of Plutarch's excerpt in the *Apophthegmata Lycurgi* can be trusted (Plut., *Mor.* 226F; *Lyk.* 12, 5; cf. Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 13, 1). The kings could also invite other Spartiates to their mess to share the double portion of food which was one of their privileges (Hdt. 6, 57; Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 15, 4; cf. *Ages.* 5, 1).

30 Ephorus, *FGHist* 70 F 149, ap. Strabo 483C; that this also applied in Sparta is hinted at by Cartledge, op. cit. (n. 12) 36 n. 78.

31 *Hell.* 5, 4, 26–8. One might have doubts about the typicality of this instance involving an immediate heir to the kingship, although the context does suggest that Archidamos belonged to an ordinary mess not that of the kings. The implication of *ibid.* 29 is that Kleonymos did not attend the mess every day. The evidence of Xen., *Symp.* 8, 35, according to which a youth might be stationed next to *xenoi* ['foreigners']

(Xenophon presumably means *perioikoi*) and not in the same battle-line as his *erastes*, does not prove that they were not in the same *syssition*, since even though members of a *syssition* fought within the same *enomotia* (see section IIc below) any two given members might be stationed in different ranks or files and next to *perioikoi*.

32 See esp. Cartledge, op. cit. (n. 12) 27 ff. The only two relationships which we can document, those between Lysander and Agesilaos (n. 23 above) and between Archidamos and Kleonymos, lend themselves naturally to this interpretation.

33 34 f.; cf. the remarks of Plato on the potential factional dangers of common messes (*Laws* 636B–C).

34 Nilsson, op. cit. (n. 11) 317 attempts to equate the leader implied in this passage with the *kreodaites* (carver of meat) whom Pollux 6, 34 and Plut., *Mor.* 644B designate as an important official, the latter on the basis that Lysander was once appointed to the post by Agesilaos. The importance of this office is, however, open to doubt, since Plut., *Ages.* 8, 1 and *Lys.* 23, 11, neither of which is cited by Nilsson, indicate that Agesilaos' appointment of Lysander to this post was intended as an insult.

35 The sense of [*arton antiparaballousin*] appears from Athen. 4,139C (citing Epicharmos) to be a contribution of wheat bread to eat with the meat; cf. Michell, op. cit. (n. 11) 293. Wheat was a superior cereal to the barley supplied in the normal *syssitia* contributions (Plut., *Lyk.* 12, 3; Dikaiarchos, ap. Athen. 4,141C).

36 References to the main modern accounts are given at the start of Andrewes' judicious discussion in *HCTIV* 111 ff., to which add Toynbee, op. cit. (n. 11) 365 ff.; J. K. Anderson, *Military Theory and Practice in the Age of Xenophon*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1970, 225 ff.; K.-W. Welwei, *Unfreie im antiken Kriegsdienst* I, Wiesbaden 1974, 128 ff. and 138 ff.; Cartledge, *Sparta* 254 ff.

37 For the details of the obal army below, see H. T. Wade-Gery, *CQ* 38, 1944, 115 ff., at 117 ff. = *Essays in Greek History*, Oxford 1958, 71 ff. (I shall cite by the latter version.) Although there may have been further changes to the army towards the end of the fifth century and after the battle of Leuktra in 371, they do not appear to have affected either the overall structure of command or the composition of the *enomotia* which concern me below. I shall therefore treat the army of the late fifth century and after as a single entity.

38 Cf. A. J. Toynbee, op. cit. (n. 15) 263 f.

39 Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 13, 5; cf. P. Cartledge, 'Hoplites and heroes: Sparta's contribution to the technique of ancient warfare', *JHS* 97, 1977, 11 ff.

40 On uniform equipment, see the discussion and refs. in Cartledge, *ibid.*, esp. 13, 15 and 27. It included a standard shield faced with bronze which was introduced by 425 at the latest. It was, however, permitted for this to bear a personal emblem in addition to the official and compulsory initial Lambda (Anderson, op. cit. [n. 36] 18 ff.).

41 Thuc. 5, 70; cf. Cartledge, *ibid.* 16 and n. 43.

42 Cartledge, *ibid.* 13 and n. 20, 16 n. 47.

43 Cf. esp. Thuc. 5, 72, 4 and the discussion by Anderson, op. cit. 245 ff. Olympic victors also had the right to fight around the king (Plut., *Lyk.* 22, 7; *Mor.* 639E), but perhaps not those winners of chariot-races who did not actually compete personally. The three Spartiate tent-companions of the king (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 13, 1) may also have fought around him, to judge from Xen., *Hell.* 6, 4, 14. This passage suggests that the *polemarchoi* also had their special aides.

44 Y. Garlan, *War in the Ancient World*, London 1975, 160.

45 The same structure of command, though with some discrepancies of detail, is described in the early fourth century in Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 11, 4.

46 A number is missing from the text; either single or double file must be meant.

47 The text and exact translation of the last clause are doubtful.

48 Anderson, op. cit. (n. 36) 299 n. 37 is surely correct in thinking that they will have fought at the head of their units, not in 'blank files' on the right as suggested by Oilier, op. cit. (n. 18)

49 Unfortunately, it is not easy to draw more precise conclusions about the impact of this hierarchy. To do so it would be necessary to know how many Spartiates there were in an *enomotia*, and thereby out of what number the officers were selected. In practice there were probably 25 Spartiates in the *enomotia* of the obal army, but the numbers of officers is uncertain. The figures for the later army are more intractable still, because from the late fifth century various non-Spartiate elements, especially *perioikoi*, were brigaded into the Spartiate regiments in the army. Since the number of Spartiates was rapidly declining, the ratio of Spartiates to others in the army must have been constantly changing. Only for the period c.425, when Thucydides' figures (4, 38, 5) for the numbers captured on Sphakteria may make it possible to extrapolate a rough ratio of two Spartiates to three non-Spartiates, and for Leuktra in 371, when Xenophon (*Hell.* 6, 4, 15; cf. 17) says that there were 700 Spartiates at the battle, is there any indication of Spartiate numbers. But even then calculations of the number of Spartiates in an *enomotia*

are obstructed by continuing controversy over two basic questions: first, whether the number of *enomotiai* in the army was 96 or 192; secondly, whether non-Spartiates were brigaded into the army by dividing them more or less evenly among all the *enomotiai* or by concentrating them together and thereby attempting to keep certain *enomotiai* as purely Spartiate as possible. For discussions of all these questions, see the works cited in n. 36 above.

50 The abundant evidence is cited by Bielschowsky, op. cit. (n. 25) 32 ff.; cf. also Nilsson, op. cit. (n. 11) 315 f.; Toynbee, op. cit. (n. 15) 267 f.; Busolt-Swoboda 698 f.

51 In view of the recent exposition of the close connections between hunting and hoplite warfare by R. Lonis, *Guerre et religion en Grèce à l'époque classique*, Paris 1979, 31 ff., it seems that the criteria of fighting ability and talent at hunting may have been more complementary than conflicting. The evidence of Xen., *Hell.* 4, 5, 16 suggests that the best soldiers were among those aged 20–34.

52 Again a more precise assessment is difficult because of our ignorance of the exact numerical relationship between the *syssition* and the *enomotia*. Plutarch's figure (*Lyk.* 12, 3) of about 15 men in the *syssition* fits badly with that of 40 in the *enomotia*. Plutarch's number may, moreover, include men of 60 or over who were not in the army. The problem of the ratio of Spartiates to non-Spartiates within the *enomotiai* is also relevant. For the figure of 25 men in the *enomotia* given by Suidas, s.v. *enomotia*, see Wade-Gery, op. cit. (n. 37) 84 n. 2.

53 Seniority among the *polemarchoi* may have decided this.

54 Cf. recently Lonis, op. cit., esp. 25 ff.

55 Plut., *Lyk.* 27, 3; *Moralia* 23 8D. Some of these inscriptions survive, e.g. *IG V* 1, 701–3 and 706–7; cf. also the tomb erected in the Kerameikos in Athens for the Spartiates who died in 403, on which see most recently F. Willemsen, *MDAI(A)* 92, 1977, 117 ff.

56 Cf. the hymns or paens sung at the festival of the Gymnopaïdai in honour of the 300 men who died in the 'Battle of the Champions' at Thyrea c.545 (F. Böhle, *RhM* 78, 1929, 124 ff., at 130 n. 6; H. T. Wade-Gery, *CQ* 43, 1949, 79 ff., at 80 n. 4); the prizes of valour (*aristeia*) awarded to outstanding Spartiates who died fighting against the Persians in 480/79 (W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1974–9, 1 285, Table 12). Alpheios and Maron, who were foremost among the 300 who died at Thermopylai, had a sanctuary at Sparta (Paus. 2, 12, 9). Their commander, King Leonidas, also had a monument and a stone tablet there bore the names of all the 300 (ibid. 14, 1). Their death was commemorated annually, probably from a date soon after the event (R. Ball, 'Herodotos' list of the Spartans who died at Thermopylai', *Museum Africum* 5, 1976, 1 ff.). Brasidas, who died at Amphipolis in 422, also had a monument at Sparta (Paus. 3, 14, 1). Heroization was the honour Tyrtaios had recommended for dead warriors in the seventh century (12, 31–2 West; C. Fuqua, 'Tyrtaios and the Cult of Heroes', *GRBS* 22, 1981, 215 ff.). It is not without significance that his poems were sung to hoplites on campaign in the classical period (Lykourgos, *Against Leokrates* 107). On the subject of noble death, see N. Loraux, 'La "belle mort" spartiate', *Ktema* 2, 1977, 105 ff.

57 The prestige gained by the lineage of a dead warrior is emphasized already in Tyrtaios 12, 29–30 West.

58 According to Lewis 42 n. 102, Thucydides' language suggests some formal institutionalized commendation. Cf. the prize of valour earlier given to Eurýbiades, the victorious admiral at Salamis in 480 (Hdt. 8, 124).

59 Lonis, op. cit. [n. 51] 31 ff. demonstrates how this practice was consistent with the duty imposed on Spartiates over 30 to maintain their fitness in peace-time by engaging in hunting (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 4, 7; 6, 3), an activity which emphasized individual performance.

60 Xen., *Hell.* 2,3,10; cf. Lewis 42. The action at Methone took place in late June or July 431. The Athenian expedition probably set sail between June 2 and 15 (Thuc. 2,23,2; *HCT* II 79 f.) and the action took place before the solar eclipse of August 3 (Thuc. 2,28). The date on which Brasidas was commended in Sparta is not known. It is likely that the ephorials elections took place in the late summer. They probably entered office in late September or early October (cf. De Ste Croix 320 f.). It is not known how it was decided which of the ephors became the eponymous ephor. May it have been the man elected with the loudest acclaim? Recently P. A. Rahe, *Historia* 29, 1980, 385 ff. has argued that the ephors were not elected directly by the assembly but chosen by lot out of an elected pool of candidates; note, however, the criticisms of P. J. Rhodes, *Historia* 30, 1981, 498 ff., who concludes (502) that 'the method of appointment was direct election and there is no need to suppose that the electing body was any other than the assembly'. [For further discussion, see now L. G. Mitchell, *Greeks Bearing Gifts: The Public Use of Private Relationships in the Greek World, 435–323 BC*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, Ch. 4, esp. 80–9.]

61 Cf. also the case of Arimnestos (or Aemnestos) who killed the Persian general Mardonios at Plataia in 479. He is later found in command of an elite of 300 men which fought against the entire forces of the

Messenians, probably during the Messenian revolt of the late 460s (Hdt. 9, 64; Plut., *Aristeides* 19, 1).

62 The obvious examples are the thwarting of Lysander's policies by King Pausanias in Athens in 403 and by King Agesilaos in Asia Minor in 396.

63 Cf. Thucydides' remarks (3, 93, 2.) on the harsh and unjust government of Spartiate harmosts at Herakleia.

64 To avoid excessive citation of references in what follows I have given after each name the number accorded to that person in the prosopography of Poralla, op. cit. (n. 9), which provides exhaustive references to the ancient sources.

65 Several other instances could be cited from different periods. For example, Perikleidas (P 608), the envoy to Athens in 464, was the father of Athenaios (P 32), who had an important role in the armistice of 423. Kleandridas (P 420), the adviser to the young King Pleistoanax in 446, was the father of Gylippos (P 196), who was sent to Syracuse in winter 415/4 and was later an officer under Lysander. Naukleidas (P 548), son of Polybiades, was probably the father of the Polybiades (P 625) who was commander against Olynthos in 380/79. Timokrates (P 699), who was the leading adviser sent to Knemos in 429, may well be an ancestor of the Timokrates (P 700) who was envoy to Athens in 369. Euthykles (P 301), envoy to Persia in 367, was probably the father of Euthykles (P 302), who was also envoy in 333; cf. D. J. Mosley, *CR* 22, 1972, 167 ff. In his *Envoys and Diplomacy in Ancient Greece, Historia Einzelschriften* 22, Wiesbaden 1973, 51 ff. Mosley notes that in their selection of envoys the Spartiates usually picked men from distinguished families, especially those whose ancestors had previously conducted diplomatic relations with the state in question.

66 On the question whether Sthenelaidas was ephor for the year 433/2 or 432/1, De Ste Croix 320 ff. P. A. Rahe, *Lysander and the Spartan settlement, 407–403 B.C.*, Diss. Yale 1977, 168 n. 125 suggests that Sthenelaos was his grandson.

67 For the following details, Lewis 35 n. 65; Whitehead, op. cit. (n. 23) 192 f.; *HCT* V 69.

68 Thuc. 5, 19, 2. 24, 1; cf. A. Andrewes and D. M. Lewis, 'A Note on the Peace of Nikias', *JHS* 77, 1957, 77 ff.; Lewis 42 n. 105.

69 Finley, op. cit. (n. 10) 29.

70 Ibid. 32 f.

71 *Pol.* 1306318–19. On the meaning of *dynasteutike*, cf. 1292a39–b10; Thuc. 3, 62, 3. On eligibility for the *gerousia*, see recently De Ste Croix Appendix XXVII.

72 Redfield, op. cit. (n. 16) 158. My view on Spartiate land tenure is close to that of Cartledge, *Sparta* 165 ff. For references to modern work on this controversial issue, Oliva, op. cit. (n. 77) 32 ff. and 48 ff.

7 *Spartan Wives: Liberation or Licence?*^{*†}

PAUL CARTLEDGE

I

The neologism 'sexist' has gained entry to an Oxford Dictionary, *The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, third edition (1974), where it is defined as 'derisive of the female sex and expressive of masculine superiority'. Thus 'sexpot' and 'sex kitten', which are still defined in exclusively feminine terms in the fifth edition of *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1976), have finally met their lexicographical match.

This point about current English usage has of course a serious, and general, application. For language reflects, when it does not direct, prevailing social conceptions. Thus it is not accidental that there is no masculine counterpart to the word 'feminism'. 'Male chauvinism', the nearest we have come to coining one, is more emotive than descriptive and so involves ambiguity; while 'sexism', even when it is given an exclusively masculine connotation, is still, formally, sexually neutral. 'Feminism', by contrast, unequivocally denotes the striving to raise women to an equality of rights and status with men.¹

It has been suggested, it is true, that there were inchoate feminist movements or tendencies in the ancient Greek world, for example in the Classical Athens of Aristophanes and Plato (where, as we shall see, they would certainly have been in place).² But feminism in the modern sense did not really emerge before the eighteenth century; and in Britain, for instance, it was only with the passage in 1975 of the Employment Protection, Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts that women raised themselves on to an all but equal footing with their male fellows – at any rate in the technical, juridical sense.³

Despite such advances, however, there is obviously still ample room for controversy over precisely what counts as sexual equality, and over the ideas and practices consistent with its achievement or maintenance. What is not controversial, on the other hand, is that scholarly interest in all sorts and conditions of women is currently running at an unprecedentedly high level. Not surprisingly, if some-what belatedly, some of this interest has rubbed off on students of the ancient world. In 1970 Ste Croix could still legitimately complain that 'ancient historians, one may think, too readily forget that women are, after all, half the human race'.⁴ But since then the steady trickle of studies on women in Graeco-Roman antiquity has turned into a small flood,⁵ and in 1976 there appeared a scholarly work which ventured to cover and summarize the whole field.⁶

It should, however, be said at the outset that the women of ancient Sparta

form something of an exception to the rule of oblivion suggested by Ste Croix. The reason for this is, I think, fairly straightforward. As Winwood Reade nicely expressed it a century ago, 'in Greece a lady could only enter society by adopting a mode of life which in England usually facilitates her exit'.⁷ In other words, the female citizen population of Sparta – or so it has seemed to non-Spartan males from at least the sixth century BC – enjoyed the extraordinary and perhaps unique distinction of both being 'in society' and yet behaving in a (to them) socially unacceptable manner. Naturally, the particular aspects of female Spartan behaviour which have excited hostile comment have varied according to the epoch and outlook of the individual contributors to the far from moribund 'Spartan tradition'.⁸

On the other side of the fence, however, from at least the late fifth century B.C. onwards there have been male 'Lakonizers', admirers of all things Spartan, who have found Spartan sexual mores and institutions worthy both of praise and of imitation.⁹ Indeed, following the rise of modern feminism, female emancipation has joined the ranks of 'the most diverse ideas ... formulated or recommended with Spartan aid'.¹⁰ Thus what had seemed outrageous or at least unseemly to the sixth-century BC Sicilian poet Ibykos and his likeminded successors in the behaviour of the Spartan 'fair' or 'gentle' sex has also been portrayed in recent times as a shining example of women's liberation in practice.¹¹ The main aim of this paper will be to try to strike a balance between these extreme attitudes – so far, that is, as this is possible for a male ancient historian dependent in the end on exclusively male literary sources.¹²

My secondary aim is to provide, space permitting, a complete and accurate account of what we can (and cannot) know, or reasonably assert, about the social and economic position of adult Spartan women of citizen status in the sixth to fourth centuries BC – or, what comes to the same thing, about the position of those of them who entered the estate of matrimony.¹³ For although they have earned a regular place in the scholarly literature on Greek women as a whole and on Spartan history in general, justice has yet to be done, it seems to me, either to the importance of the subject¹⁴ or to the complexity, variety and, not least, the fragility of the evidence.

One final preliminary point should perhaps be made before the substantive discussion is begun. A few years ago in a stimulating Inaugural Lecture delivered before Oxford University Degler asked whether there was a 'history of women'.¹⁵ By this he meant: is there a history of women in the same sense that there is a history of, say, blacks in America or of any other 'minority' group?¹⁶ That is, can a purely sexual difference be regarded as in and of itself historically significant, or are women, for all important purposes, so inextricably tied to men that 'women's history' cannot be conceived of as a separate and autonomous subject of study? Degler's own answer was as follows (p. 31):

Women are different from men, both in the roles they have been assigned or have assumed historically and in their biological make-up. History, in short, affects them differently from men, just as they affect history differently. Their past cannot be subsumed under the history of men. What we need to recognize is not that women and men are the same – as certain political and polemical goals might suggest – but that they are different. For it is that difference that justifies, indeed requires, a history of women.

The evidence for the women of ancient Sparta regrettably does not allow us to consider in detail the factor of ‘biological make-up’ on which Degler rightly places great emphasis. However, although I think I agree in principle that there is a history of women such as Degler delineates, I am far more concerned than perhaps he would be to show that the real significance of the Spartan women under study here flows from their integral place within the structure of Spartan society as a whole.

II

In order to provide some orientation I shall begin by outlining, with the minimum of necessary annotation, the views on Spartan women expressed in the second half of the fourth century BC by Aristotle in the *Politics* (II. 9, 1269a29–1271b19). This passage has been selected as a map and compass for three main reasons. First, Aristotle was unquestionably the greatest sociological thinker of antiquity.¹⁷ Secondly, despite his attendance at Plato’s Academy, he was singularly free from that ‘Lakonomania’ which infected certain upper-class circles in democratic Athens.¹⁸ Thirdly, however, he fully shared the dominant male conception of women as inferior in his society; and, as Theodore Besterman has remarked of Voltaire in a different connection, his language ‘was the language of his time, and we must not expect even the greatest of men always to rise above their environment’.¹⁹

Following an examination of the ideal states proposed by Plato and two others, Aristotle turns to the three polities which had generally been accounted the best of those actually existing – Sparta, Crete (treated as a political unit for theoretical purposes) and Carthage. He prefaces his discussion of Sparta with the observation that all polities must be evaluated in accordance with two different kinds of criterion. According to the first, any positive law shall be adjudged good or bad in the light of the laws of the ideal state – Aristotle’s own version of which is exposed later, in the seventh Book. According to the second, a law shall be adjudged good or bad according as it is, or is not, consonant with the idea or postulate (*hypothesis*) and character of the constitution (*politeia*) set before the citizens (or, following a variant MS. reading, himself) by the lawgiver.

As for the first type of criterion, Aristotle self-confessedly follows the Plato of the *Laws* (I. 625C–638B: contrast *Rep.* VIII. 544c) in adjudging the *hypothesis*

of the Spartan lawgiver reprehensible on the grounds that it is one-dimensional and deals with only a part of virtue, the military part (1271a41–71b10).²⁰ How, then, does Sparta measure up when evaluated according to the second kind of criterion? Poorly, is Aristotle's categorical answer – a judgement he seeks to substantiate by discussing in turn the seven main areas in which he finds it especially faulty, viz. the Helots, the women, the Ephorate, the Gerousia, the common meals, the system of naval command, and public finance. (His aspersions on the joint monarchy seem to me to fall rather under the first type of criterion.) I shall restrict myself to the second item, whose placing cannot be co-incidental, and scrutinize Aristotle's seven specific criticisms of the Spartan women.

The first of these is addressed to [*he peri tas gynaikas anesis*], either 'the licence permitted to the women' or 'the licentiousness of the women' (the Greek is formally ambiguous). Such licence or indiscipline (*anesis*) is deleterious both to the general intention of the constitution and to the happiness or well-being of the state. Since women constitute half the citizen population of any state (cf. *Rhet.*I. 5. 1361a10–12), in *politeiai* where their condition is degenerate half the state must be considered unregulated by law – an exaggerated conclusion hardly entailed by the premisses, but one which, again, accords with the Plato of the *Laws* (I. 637c, VI. 781A, VII. 806c). In what, then, does this degeneracy consist? Whereas the state is hardy as far as the male citizens are concerned, the women abandon themselves utterly to every sort of intemperance and luxury;²¹ once more, this is at the very least a sweeping generalization, perhaps to be explained by the fact that 'fear is always mixed with the blame attached to woman's licentious conduct'.²²

The consequence of the women's intemperate luxury affords Aristotle his second ground for criticism, that in Sparta wealth is highly valued.²³ The damage this caused was aggravated by the third ground of complaint, the circumstance that the Spartan men were ruled by their women. Aristotle takes this state of affairs to be typical of all military and warlike peoples, with the exception of the Celts and a few others who openly place a high value on male homosexual intercourse. Then, after some further general remarks, Aristotle comments vaguely that at the time of Sparta's domination – that is, before 370 BC and perhaps specifically from 404 to 371 – many things were managed by the women.²⁴

Another consequence of the women's intemperance (*akolasia*), and Aristotle's fourth ground for criticism, is that they exercised an extremely harmful influence even over the audaciousness of the state. For example, during the Theban invasion of Lakonia (370 BC) they were not merely useless, like women in other states,²⁵ but actually produced more confusion than the enemy – yet again, somewhat of an overstatement, although their poor showing is demonstrated by the well-informed and usually pro-Spartan Xenophon (*Hell.* VI. 5. 28; cf. *Plut., Ages.* 31.5 f.).

Aristotle now pauses to consider how the indiscipline of the women came

about. It was, he says, only to be expected. For during a series of wars against their Peloponnesian neighbours the men were away from home for long periods and were made ready for the lawgiver, Lykourgos, by their military mode of life. The women, by contrast, traditionally succeeded in resisting the attempt of Lykourgos to submit them to the laws.²⁶

It is the women themselves, therefore, according to Aristotle, who are responsible for their indiscipline. Aristotle, however, being less concerned to assign responsibility than to establish the facts, quickly resumes the thread of his critique. Apparently recapitulating what he has just said, he states that the degenerate condition of the women not only gives the constitution an air of indecorum but also engenders material avarice. In reality, though, that is by no means a straightforward résumé of his immediately preceding remarks. The charge of avarice may indeed be regarded as specifying the general statement that wealth is highly valued in Sparta. But the accusation of indecorum is only entailed if a crucial hidden premiss is interpolated. This premiss is the view expressed earlier in the *Politics* (I. 5, 125b13–16; cf. *Poet.* 1454a20–2), that women as a sex are by nature inferior to men and marked out from birth for subjection to them, as slaves are to their masters.²⁷ Hence the indecorum of the Spartan constitution follows from the fact that the men are ruled by the women (*gynaikokratoumenoi*), since the latter have, literally, stolen the men's birthright. For in Aristotle's conventional opinion, as expressed in his *Rhetoric* (I. 5, 1361a6–8), female excellence consisted merely in bodily beauty and physique, sexual self-control and modesty, and liberal industriousness.

Mention of avarice leads Aristotle naturally to his fifth ground for criticism: the unevenness of the distribution of private landed property in Sparta. The women's contribution to this was that by the time Aristotle was composing the *Politics*, around the 330S,²⁸ almost two-fifths of the whole country (Lakonia) was in their control. In fact, for three reasons ownership of real property was concentrated in a few Spartan hands (cf. V. 7, 1307a34–6): first, the laws did not prevent the gift or bequest of land; secondly, there were many heiresses (*epiklēroi*), who might be married off at the discretion of their father or his nearest male relative; finally, dowries were large.

This apparently dominant position of rich women in Spartan land-tenure occasioned Aristotle's sixth criticism, directed against the shortage of male Spartan military manpower (*oliganthrōpia*). In a country capable of supporting 1,500 cavalymen and 30,000 hoplites – he must now be thinking not only of Lakonia but also of adjacent Messenia, which the Spartans had controlled from c. 650 to 370 BC – the citizen body sank to less than one thousand. As a result the state could not withstand a single blow, the defeat by the Thebans at Leuktra in 371. Sparta, in short, was destroyed through *oliganthrōpia*.

Aristotle next reports a tradition that in the days of 'the ancient kings' male citizen numbers had been maintained by extending the citizenship to foreigners: allegedly, the citizen body had once numbered as many as 10,000. But in his view the correct way to have ensured adequate manpower would

have been to keep landed property more evenly distributed. Instead – and this is Aristotle’s seventh and final criticism of the women, although he does not spell out what their active role in this may have been – the Spartans had a law designed to stimulate the production of (male) children (*teknopoia*). Under its provisions the father of three sons was exempted from military service, the father of four²⁹ from all state burdens. However, given the unequal distribution of landed property and – what Aristotle tacitly assumes – the normal Greek system of equal patrimonial inheritance by sons, many sons inevitably fell into poverty. That is, they became too poor to fulfil the condition of full Spartan citizenship which Aristotle faults a little later on (1271a26–37), the contribution of a minimum quantity of natural produce to a common mess.

III

Just how accurate or apposite these criticisms are, and to what period (if any) in the development of Spartan society they are peculiarly applicable – these are perhaps the two most important questions under consideration here. First, however, it must in fairness be pointed out that Aristotle’s seemingly devastating critique would not have, or did not in fact, cut much ice with two authors on whose work, *faute de mieux*, we are bound to lean heavily.

Aristotle need not have read Xenophon’s selective and mistitled, though probably authentic, essay on the Spartan constitution, the *Lakedaimoniōn Politeia*.³⁰ But Xenophon, if hardly objective, was at least a ‘participant observer’ of Spartan society in the first half of the fourth century, and his essay probably offers a representative sample of the kind of pro-Spartan arguments Aristotle may have been seeking to rebut. On the other hand, the indefatigable Plutarch, who follows Xenophon’s general ‘line’ on Sparta, at least as he conceived Sparta to have been down to c. 400 BC, was writing about AD 100. He had certainly read not only the *Politics* but also the Aristotelian *Constitution of the Spartans*³¹ and in his biography – or rather hagiography – of Lykourgos Plutarch felt constrained to reply explicitly to what he regarded as Aristotle’s unfair or misplaced criticisms.³² Clearly, the moralizing apologists Xenophon and Plutarch are hardly unimpeachable witnesses to the truth about Spartan women but, as will be seen, their testimony can at least be used to modify and supplement that of the (in some respects) more scientific Aristotle.

IV

I propose now to discuss the many controversial issues developmentally, that is, by tracing the lives of Spartan women in the sixth to fourth centuries BC from the cradle to (in some cases) the grave. I use the vague term ‘Spartan women’ advisedly. The available evidence does not permit inferences of a

statistical nature about the experience of a 'typical' Spartan woman, although in some contexts it will be necessary and possible to distinguish that of rich women. Besides, as I hope has already been made clear, the literary sources who provide the fullest pictures are highly, and consciously, selective, and they are all non-Spartan and male. Their selectivity and bias may, however, be offset to some extent by tapping sources of evidence, in particular inscriptions and material objects, which they themselves did not see fit, or had not devised the techniques, to utilize.

The evidence for the weaning and rearing of Spartan girls is scanty and not worth discussing in detail.³³ But an objection must at least be lodged against an inference drawn from an anecdote in Plutarch's *Lykourgos* (3.1–6), that all girl-babies in Sparta were normally reared.³⁴ This would have been extraordinary, I think, in terms of general Greek practice at all periods,³⁵ quite apart from the evidence suggesting that in Sparta the exposure of neonates was fairly frequent and that women were, if anything, in relatively short supply.³⁶ But we are not in any case bound to attribute a universal validity to the passage in question nor indeed to accept the construction placed upon it by Lacey and Pomeroy.³⁷

It is necessary, however, to dwell rather longer on two cardinal aspects of the childhood and adolescence of Spartan women. First, whereas the Spartan boy left the parental home for good at the age of seven to embark upon the gruelling system of state education known as the *agōgē*, the Spartan girl – like her counterparts in other Greek states (cf. Hesiod. *Op.* 520) – resided with her parents until marriage. Specifically, she continued to reside with her mother, for the matricentral character of a Spartan girl's home-life was heavily accentuated by the fact that her father was expected to spend most of his time living communally and in public with his male peers – indeed, all of his time, should he have become a father before the age of thirty (below, section VII). This may help to explain the incidence of female homosexuality involving an older woman and an adolescent girl reported by Plutarch (*Lyk.* 18. 9).³⁸

Secondly, however, unlike girls in all other Greek states, Spartan girls were also given some form of public education. Whether or not we accept the attractive suggestion of Nilsson³⁹ that they underwent a course of training parallel to the *agōgē*, Spartan girls undoubtedly were educated in a sense other than trained to perform sedentary, and in ancient Greece exclusively feminine, tasks like weaving (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 1. 3 f.; Plato, *Laws* VII. 806A) and baking [Herakleides Lembos] 373. 13).⁴⁰ The running races mentioned in Xenophon (*Lak. Pol.* 1. 4) and Plutarch (*Lyk.* 14. 3; *Mor.* 227D) and paralleled in other sources (Theocr. 18. 22; Paus. 3. 13. 7; Hesych. s.v. '*en Driōnas*') very likely had a ritual significance,⁴¹ as certainly did the choral dancing in which Spartan maidens participated both in Sparta and at sanctuaries elsewhere in Lakonia and Messenia.⁴² But the throwing of the discus and javelin and the trials of strength or wrestling also attested by Xenophon and Plutarch presumably had a mainly secular character. It is, however, a little hard to credit the evidence of

Euripides (*Andr.* 597–600) that the girls wrestled naked with the boys.⁴³ For this looks like a deliberate travesty in line with the view of Euripides – or strictly Peleus, father of Achilles – that it was impossible for a Spartan maiden to be sexually modest (*sōphrōn*: *Andr.* 595 f.).⁴⁴

Such an accusation, on the other hand, does appear to have some basis in Spartan actuality. For both total nudity in public (at religious processions: Plut., *Lyk.* 14.4–7) and the wearing of a revealingly slit mini-chiton (Pollux 7. 54 f.)⁴⁵ – hence the opprobrious epithet ‘thigh-showers’ first known from Ibykos (fr. 58 Page)⁴⁶ – are strikingly confirmed by a series of Spartan bronzes, mostly of the sixth century.⁴⁷ These free-standing figurines and mirror-handles portray girls or young women with underdeveloped or de-emphasized secondary sex characteristics. It is not, I think, fanciful to associate this feature with the strongly homosexual orientation of the average Spartan male.⁴⁸ But what is most significant is that the nude female figure is not at all frequent in Greek art before the fifth century and then is normally reserved for women of low social status. The shock felt by non-Spartan, and especially perhaps Athenian, males at such un-inhibited – indeed, indecent because masculine – exposure may the more readily be comprehended if, as I believe possible, Spartan girls appeared publicly in the nude (or at least scantily clad) after puberty.⁴⁹

According to Xenophon and Plutarch, the Spartan girl’s education was confined to physical exertions and designed to serve exclusively eugenic ends, that is, to produce strong mothers of healthy infants and to alleviate the pangs of childbirth (in which, we infer, maternal mortality was not infrequent).⁵⁰ No doubt eugenic considerations were important, particularly perhaps after c. 500 when, as we shall see, official steps were taken to further procreation. But there is also evidence to suggest that the things of the mind were not entirely neglected.

According to Plato in the *Protagoras* (342D), there were Spartan women who prided themselves on their learning and culture (*paideusis*). He refers specifically to their attainment in speech (*logoi*) – notoriously, Spartan women did have something to say and were reputedly not afraid to say it⁵¹ – and singles out their contribution to quintessentially Spartan brachylogy [‘brevity of speech’]. But he also mentions their *philosophia* in this passage and, in the *Laws* (VII. 806A; cf. *Rep.* V. 452A), their participation in high culture (*mousikē*). Not much weight can be placed on the testimony of Plato, the philo-Lakonian or at least unorthodox Greek educationist.⁵² But Aristophanes (*Lys.* 1237; cf. *Vesp.* 1245–7) apparently refers to a Spartan poetess called Kleitagora,⁵³ and Iamblichos (*Vita [Pythagorica]* 267) names several female Spartan Pythagoreans. Finally, the epigraphical evidence, though slight and formally ambiguous, at least does not contradict the view that at any rate some Spartan women were basically literate.⁵⁴ Basic literacy, after all, was the most that the ordinary Spartan man was expected to acquire.⁵⁵

The real significance of this education, in both its physical and intellectual

aspects, is that it reflects an official attempt to maintain some form or degree of parity between the sexes. The chief function of this apparent equality of treatment, however, was not one a modern feminist would necessarily approve, but rather to socialize the non-military half of the citizen population.⁵⁶ At all events, it was certainly not designed to promote companionship or partnership in marriage; as we have seen, Aristotle attributed what he took to be the indiscipline of the women, not to the equality of their education, but to the separateness of Spartan married life. On balance, therefore, I incline to think that the introduction or general enforcement of the male *agōgē*, in the course of the seventh and sixth centuries, diminished the status of women in Sparta.⁵⁷ Thereafter, much as elsewhere in Greece though in a peculiarly singleminded way, the primary emphasis in their upbringing was on preparing them for their future subordinate role as wives and mothers of warriors.

V

The ostensible purpose of the physical side of a Spartan girl's education may, then, have been to cultivate eugenic strength. It might, however, also be argued that a by-product of her vigorous open-air existence in the demanding Spartan climate was the far-famed beauty of Spartan women.⁵⁸ Lysistrata, in Aristophanes' play of the same name (*Lys.* 79–83), marvels with considerable comic hyperbole at Lampito's muscular virility. But the Athenian woman also praises the Spartan woman's skin and marvellous breasts.⁵⁹ The other facets of Spartan feminine beauty singled out for example by the Spartan poet Alkman in his maiden-songs of c. 600 BC.⁶⁰ are less recondite, indeed conventionally aristocratic: above-average height, slim, well-turned ankles, and long, flowing, fair hair.⁶¹ But even the latter has a special reference in the Spartan context (below, section VII). In fact, feminine beauty *per se* may have had an important function to perform in my next pair of topics, the timing and purposes of marriage.

We are quite well informed about the precise though diverse ideas held by the Greeks on the proper age for a girl to get married.⁶² This diversity is of course only to be expected. Marriage was the most crucial *rite de passage* in any Greek girl's life,⁶³ and different states and thinkers enjoined or advocated different norms in accordance with their evaluation of the status and functions of women. As far as Sparta is concerned, however, our information is disappointingly imprecise.

Lykourgos, according to Plutarch (*Mor.* 228A), set limits to the age of marriage. The existence of an upper age-limit is apparently confirmed by references to a Spartan law against late marriage (Plut., *Lys.* 30. 7; Pollux III. 48, VIII. 40); and Plutarch (*Kleom.* 1) provides evidence for a minimum age too. But these regulations, like the law enforcing marriage itself (below), almost certainly applied only to the men.⁶⁴ No source gives an absolute figure for the

age when a Spartan girl 'reached the season of marriage' (Hdt. VI. 61. 5), and Plutarch (*Lyk.* 15. 4) merely says she would not marry before her body had reached its acme. Did her diet, which was allegedly superior, presumably in quantity, to that of other Greek girls (*Xen., Lak. Pol.* 1. 3 f.; cf. Plato, *Rep.* V. 45 1E), ensure that she attained puberty earlier than the age of thirteen or fourteen, which seems to have been the norm in Greece?⁶⁵ Or alternatively did her vigorously athletic childhood delay the onset of menstruation?⁶⁶

To give Plutarch his due, however, he does at least make it clear that Spartan girls married relatively late; and, besides adducing the inevitable eugenic motive also proposed irrelevantly for the men by Xenophon (*Lak. Pol.* 1. 6; cf. *Mem.* IV. 4. 23), he reasonably claims that older brides made for happier marriages. If we tentatively adopt Nilsson's hypothesis of a female educational curriculum running in tandem with the male *agōgē*, then the lower age-limit for a girl's marriage might be set at eighteen.⁶⁷ If we also take account of what may have been the normal Spartan male practice of marriage at about twenty-five⁶⁸ and the general Greek view that the husband should be older than his wife, the upper limit should float around the twenty mark. Indeed, if we were to press the suggested parallel between male and female education, we might argue that girls normally married at the age when their brothers became fully adult warriors, probably at twenty.

One fact, however, is not in doubt. At least after c. 500 BC all Spartan men were obliged by law to marry (Plut. *Lys.* 30. 7; cf. *Lyk.* 15.1; [Stobaeus, *Florilegium*] 67. 16 Meineke; Pollux 3. 48, 8. 40);⁶⁹ and the sanctions of the law were reinforced by an elaborate ritual and customary apparatus (*Xen., Lak. Pol.* 9. 4 f.; Klearchos fr. 73 Wehrli; Plut., *Lyk.* 15. 2 f.; *Mor.* 227EF). On the one hand, there was nothing peculiarly Spartan about this. The 'making of children' (*teknopoiia*) in marriage could be accounted a form of state liturgy or public service in ancient Greece.⁷⁰ Thus there need not be anything out of the ordinary in, for instance, the Spartan marble statue of c. 600 and the terracottas of the sixth century which celebrate fertility and childbirth.⁷¹ On the other hand, however, the *de facto* exemption by c. 500 of women who died in childbed from the Spartan prohibition on named tombstones;⁷² the celebrity of the Spartan mother; and the eye-catching insistence of Kritias (88F 32D-K) in the late fifth century, followed by Xenophon (*Lak. Pol.* 1. 3) in the fourth, on the primacy of *teknopoiia* in Sparta – all these seem to betoken exceptional Spartan preoccupation with reproduction, an impression amply confirmed by Spartan marital practices (below, section VIII).

It could be argued that this preoccupation was an inevitable function of the special position the Spartans had placed themselves in since the mid-seventh century vis-à-vis their subordinate but vastly more numerous serf population, the Helots. We might compare the practice in the Mani peninsula of southern Lakonia in more recent times of referring to male infants as 'guns'.⁷³ But the emphasis of Kritias and Xenophon at least could also be a reflection of the extraordinary and critical decline in the male citizen population during the

fifth and early fourth centuries (the *oliganthrōpia* criticized by Aristotle, above, section II). In other words, what deserves particular attention, and requires careful handling, is the question how far, for whom, and at what periods, other reasons than *teknopoiia* for entering upon a marriage were affectively significant.

The sources do not allow us to discuss personal sentiment with confidence, although Bickerman has rightly noted that our evidence concerning sexual affection in Greece begins with the *Hymn to Aphrodite* (probably seventh century).⁷⁴ But they do suggest that other motives besides *teknopoiia* may sometimes have been paramount. There is, first of all, the feminine beauty discussed above, whose role is most colourfully conspicuous in the Herodotean story (VI. 61–3) of the deceitful third marriage of Ariston (reigned c. 550–15) to which we shall return. The difficulty of interpretation here is that, apart from a dubious Plutarchan apophthegm (*Mor.* 232c), the evidence concerns only kings or the *roi smanqué* Lysander (Hermippos fr. 87 Wehrli). What we cannot judge is whether feminine beauty was as it were the icing on the matrimonial cake or one of its essential ingredients – unless of course ‘beauty’ may also be interpreted figuratively as equivalent to ripeness for marriage, as some of Alkman’s poems suggest.⁷⁵

We do, however, know of two other ingredients which in some cases at least certainly were essential. The first of these is specific to the inner core of Spartan families distinguished from the rest by birth. This core embraced above all the two royal houses, the Agiadai and Eurypontidai. But it also included the wider category of ‘the descendants of Herakles’, from whom alone the royals were permitted to select their consorts (Plut., *Agis* 11. 2); and I suspect that it extended to other ‘privileged families’ too.⁷⁶ What these upper-class Spartans had in common was the desire to contract marriages amongst them selves from considerations of high politics (e.g. Hdt. V. 39–41; Plut., *Kleom.* 1). Parallels from the Homeric epics or the real world of Archaic Greek dynasts are not inapposite.⁷⁷

The second ingredient, on the other hand, was not necessarily thus restricted in its operation, although its connection with the first was intimate. I refer of course to wealth which, as the saying goes, marries wealth. In ancient Greece generally, political power and privilege connoted the possession of considerable hereditary landed property. But this does not seem necessarily to have been the case in Sparta, where manly virtue (*andragathia*) displayed in the *agōgē*, the training-ground and the battlefield, provided it was backed by the minimum of wealth needed to ensure citizen rights, could take a man like Lysander to the top.⁷⁸ Lysander, however, was the exception that proved the validity in Sparta of the general Greek rule about political power and privilege.⁷⁹ And that rich Spartans behaved like rich Greeks generally in the matrimonial field, indeed aggressively so, is strongly suggested by the existence of a Spartan law against ‘bad’ marriage (Pollux III. 48; VIII. 40), which Plutarch (*Lys.* 30. 7) tells us was principally designed to deter them from

contracting marriages for reasons of economic gain.

By the time of Aristotle, however, and I suspect for at least a century before, this law was a dead letter; and, as we saw, a crucial part of Aristotle's critique of Spartan women was also a critique of the Spartan property-regime as a whole. Since the latter is a problem of massive proportions, it is impossible to broach it usefully here beyond stating dogmatically my belief that all the land of which Spartan citizens had the usufruct was possessed in the form of private and alienable property from at least the mid-seventh century.⁸⁰ it is, however, necessary to attempt to assess the active role of the Spartan women in a property system whose defectiveness in Aristotle's view was ultimately responsible for the downfall of Sparta as a great power.

VI

By Aristotle's day the distribution of land in Lakonia was massively unequal. In itself this was not very remarkable: the situation could be paralleled in many other Greek states. What was remarkable, however, or so it struck Aristotle, was that almost two-fifths of the whole country – by which can only be meant the land in Lakonia owned by Spartan citizens – was in the hands of women. We do not know how Aristotle came by this figure, but undoubtedly to his (sexist) eyes it was in itself reprehensible. Certainly, too, it presupposed a stark contrast between the property laws of Sparta and those of Athens, in which he spent a considerable amount of his adult life as a resident alien (and so, incidentally, as one technically debarred from owning real property). It becomes less extraordinary, however, in a comparative perspective.

As Ste Croix has emphasized,⁸¹ Athenian women of post-Classical times eventually became considerably better off in respect of property ownership than their oppressed forebears of the fifth and fourth centuries (below). But if a more direct comparison and contrast be sought, then we may point to the fact that in Aristotle's own day there were maternal inheritances (*matrōia*) as well as patrimonies (*patrōia*) in, for example, Arkadian (and so non-Dorian) Tegea⁸² and, most relevantly, Dorian Gortyn on Crete. Cretan parallels have been too often used as a substitute for the evidence we lack for Sparta. But a case can be made for, if not a direct relationship, at least a parallelism of development between some aspects of the Cretan and Spartan social systems.⁸³ And in the case of women's property rights the comparative material from Gortyn does seem peculiarly informative, even though it relates to conditions in force c. 450 BC, a century or more before Aristotle was composing the *Politics*.⁸⁴

Aristotle, in the passage considered in section II, noted that there were many *epiklēroi* in Sparta and that *proikes* (dowries) were large. I believe he was seriously mistaken or at least misleading on both counts. In the first place, he was almost certainly technically incorrect to use the Athenian term *epiklēros* to describe the Spartan heiress.⁸⁵ His error, however, may be more than merely

one of vocabulary. For in classical Athens women could not hold and dispose of more than a trifling amount of property in their own right, and the heiress, who literally 'went with the estate', was bound to marry her nearest male relative in order to keep the estate within the descent-group of her father. Herodotus (VI. 57. 4), by contrast, refers to the Spartan heiress as *patrouchos* (literally 'holder of the patrimony'), and this apparently corresponds to the Gortynian *patrōiōkos*. Now in Gortyn, unlike Athens, women could own property in their own right ([*Leges Gortymensiorum*] II. 46 f., 49 f., III. 25, 32 f., 36, 42 f., IV. 26 f., V. 1–9, 17–22, VII. 52–VIII. 30, IX. 8 f.), and daughters automatically inherited a (smaller) portion of the family estate alongside their brothers (IV. 46–V. 9). So it seems that here Herodotus is the witness to the truth and that in Sparta *patrouchos* meant something like what we understand by 'heiress'.

As to dowries, the Gortynian evidence suggests that Aristotle is guilty of a similar terminological and semantic confusion. For there is no trace of the dowry at Gortyn, and there is a compelling consensus among our sources other than Aristotle and a rogue passage in the Plutarchan *Moralia* (775C–E) that there was no dowry at Sparta either.⁸⁶ One of these sources, the third-century BC grammarian Hermippos, paints a fantastic picture of Spartan men and girls of marriageable age being shut up together in a dark room for the men to take pot luck and grab a wife. This flatly contradicts our more sober evidence for the manner in which a Spartan maiden was taken for a wife (below, section VII). But the kernel of fact could be Hermippos' unequivocal statement that the captive girl was led away by her prospective husband without a dowry (*aproikos*).

In other words, what Aristotle calls 'large dowries' were really, I suggest, marriage-settlements consisting of landed property together with any moveables that a rich father (or mother) saw fit to bestow on a daughter. If a daughter had no father, or brother of the same father, then she would inherit in her own right as *patrouchos* and as such was a particularly desirable catch. It is thus not difficult to see how, given a decreasing number of legitimate male heirs of full citizen status, landed property could have become concentrated in the hands of women.

Daughter-inheritance, incidentally, would also give particular point to the information conveyed only by Philo, the Jewish scholar of the first century AD ([*On Special Laws*] III. 4. 22), that in Sparta uterine siblings (*homomatritioi*) were permitted to marry.⁸⁷ We know of no actual examples of such a marriage, but we know of no specific Spartan incest-taboo against them either;⁸⁸ and there is evidence that the Spartans, like so many other peoples before the nineteenth century, attributed the active role in reproduction solely to the 'child-making seed' (Hdt. VI. 68. 3, with 61. 2) of the father.⁸⁹ If we tentatively accept Philo's evidence, we have another, though small, contributory cause of the concentration of landed property in a few hands.

According to Herodotus (VI. 57. 4), however, the Spartan kings in his day,

the mid-fifth century, had jurisdiction over the allocation of *patrouchoi*, in cases where the father had not made express provision for their marriage before his death. A second royal prerogative was to witness adoptions, which is not irrelevant to note in view of the alleged Spartan hostility to what we call 'the family', are 'characteristic of a ... society which thinks in terms of inheritance through the family'.⁹⁰ Yet by the second half of the fourth century both of these prerogatives had been forfeited to the discretion of private individuals, and Aristotle was either unaware of their former existence or perfectly aware that they had not served, even if they had been designed, to even out the distribution of private landed property and maintain male citizen numbers.

Indeed, the kings themselves, despite their monthly oath to obey the laws (Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 15. 7), did not a little to help along the process of property-concentration. (Here we recall those motives for marriage other than *teknopoia* considered in section V.) Anaxandridas II (reigned c. 560–20), Leonidas I (c. 491–80) and Archidamos II (c. 469–27) all married close consanguineous kin (Hdt. V. 39, VII. 239, VI. 71); while Kleomenes III (236–22) was married off to the widow of Agis IV (c. 244–1) precisely because she was a *patrouchos* (Plut., *Kleom.* 1: Plutarch, however, naturally calls Agiatis an *epikleros*). What endows these royal marriages with special significance is that in the mid-third century the mother and grandmother of Agis were accounted the richest of all Spartans. In fact, by the time of Agis' accession the proportion of land owned by women in Sparta had reportedly increased from almost two-fifths to an absolute majority (Plut., *Agis* 7. 4).

However, whether the ownership of property by rich women automatically entailed property-power exercised in the political sphere or (if they are distinct) the 'gynecocracy' criticized by Aristotle is of course a different question. If we are to judge of this and so of the responsibility of the women themselves for the concentration of property in their hands, we must now turn from the theory to the praxis of Spartan marriage.⁹¹

VII

Herodotus, we suggested, was probably precise in the use of the term *patrouchos*. But was he also technically correct to employ the normal Athenian word for 'betroth', *engyo*, in the Spartan context, and were all daughters (whether *patrouchoi* or not) 'betrothed' by their father or his male heir acting in the capacity of legal guardian (*kyrios*), as Aristotle apparently believed?⁹² In other words, did a Spartan daughter have no more say in the choice of husband or the terms of the marriage contract than an Athenian girl, or did she have the room for manoeuvre (to put it no higher) enjoyed by her counterpart at Gortyn, where the *kyrieia* (legal guardianship of a female by her nearest male relative, usually her father in the first instance and then her husband) did not obtain? The evidence is slight and not clearcut.⁹³ However, a

passage in Xenophon's *Lak. Pol.* (9. 5), apparently to the effect that no one would ask a legally adjudged coward (*tresas*) for the hand of any unmarried female in his household, seems to me to tilt the balance firmly in favour of the existence of the *kyrieia*.⁹⁴ If that is so, then we cannot automatically infer that ownership of property conferred on Spartan women personal independence, let alone political power.

However that may be, another well-known Herodotean story (Vi. 65. 2) provides less equivocal evidence for the next stage of the nuptial process. Damaratos (reigned c. 515–491) is said to have frustrated the marriage plans of his relative (second cousin?) and royal successor, Latychidas II (c. 491–469), by (literally) anticipating him in seizing the girl to whom Latychidas was 'engaged' and 'having' her as a wife.⁹⁵ Not surprisingly, perhaps, it is at this juncture that the already powerful temptation to introduce comparative anthropological evidence from 'primitive' societies is often found irresistible.⁹⁶ It is therefore necessary to state briefly why comparison of this kind involves additional dangers here, over and above those attendant on the use of any form of comparative material.

In the case even of Archaic Greece, we are dealing with societies sensibly more complex than most of those studied by social anthropologists. Thus it is simply begging the question to label each seemingly 'primitive' feature of the historical Greek world a 'survival' from an earlier stage of culture. The correct principle, it seems to me, was well expressed long ago by Starcke:⁹⁷ 'if we are able to trace the cause of a custom in existing circumstances, we must abide by that cause, and nothing but a definite historical account of the prior existence of the custom can induce us to seek for another explanation.'⁹⁸

As to 'marriage by capture' in Sparta, we lack the evidence to construct a 'definite historical account' of its prior existence. All we can say for certain is that a capture like that effected by Damaratos is not incompatible either with a previous 'engagement' or with the non-existence of the dowry and that, at least in Plutarch's version (*Lyk.* 15.4 f.), the capture had a purely symbolic significance.⁹⁹ None the less, the symbolism is in itself not insignificant – quite apart from its being peculiarly appropriate to a military society.¹⁰⁰ For, if the sources can be believed, the girl who was 'seized' played very much the passive role. And, furthermore, although marriage at Sparta began, as at Athens, when the bride entered the house of the groom (or his parents), a Spartan marriage seems to have been conceived, not as the bilateral 'living together' of Athens, but as a one-sided 'having' of the wife by the husband (Hdt. V. 39. 2, VI. 57. 4, 65. 2; Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 1. 8; Plut., *Kleom.* 29. 3).

The wedding-night itself involved a strikingly bleak ritual.¹⁰¹ First, the bride's hair was cropped by a (presumably married) female bridal attendant (Plut., *Lyk.* 15. 5). This haircut was, I am sure, intended to signal her irrevocable transition from the status of virgin (*parthenos*) or girl (*korē*) to that of woman and wife (*gynē*), since she was not again permitted to wear her hair long.¹⁰² Thus the capillary experience of the new bride offers a perfectly

symmetrical antithesis to that of the newly adult male warrior, who on achieving manhood was encouraged to grow his hair long.¹⁰³

To reinforce the inverted quality of the ritual, the bride was then dressed in a man's cloak and sandals and laid on a pallet in an unlit room to await the nocturnal attentions of her 'captor' (Plut., *Lyk.* 15. 5–7). This masculine get-up, which is somewhat paralleled by the donning of a false beard by brides at Argos (Plut., *Mor.* 245F), has been explained as apotropaic cross-dressing.¹⁰⁴ But also worth pondering is the suggestion of Devereux that the bride's appearance was designed to ease the transition for the groom from his all-male and actively homosexual *agōgē* and common mess to full heterosexual intercourse.¹⁰⁵ Let us, however, also consider the feelings of the bride. Even if we should prefer not to believe that Spartan maidens enjoyed tutelary homosexual relations with older women (Plut., *Lyk.* 18. 9), the bride had undoubtedly been reared and raised in an almost exclusively female home environment. The shock of sexual violation by an older and probably already battle-scarred man cannot have been greatly diminished by the chill and unfamiliar scenario into which she had been forcibly thrust.

If the husband was under thirty when he 'took' a wife – as he perhaps usually would be (above and n. 68) – he was not allowed to cohabit with her, and his infrequent home visits were supposed to be conducted under cover of darkness, in conspiratorial secrecy from his messmates and even from the rest of his own household.¹⁰⁶ indeed, if we can trust Plutarch (*Lyk.* 15. 9), several children might issue from this clandestine 'affair' before a man had seen his wife in daylight. I do not, however, believe that, as some have argued, an attempt was made to keep the marriage itself secret: at any rate aristocratic brides seem to have been hymned on the morning after their wedding-night;¹⁰⁷ and Pausanias (III. 13.9) records that mothers sacrificed to a venerable wooden cult-image of Aphrodite–Hera on the occasion of their daughter's marriage. But it is possible that the Spartans customarily practised a kind of 'trial marriage', which was not counted as official until the wife had conceived or possibly even safely given birth.¹⁰⁸ We should note, though, that Anaxandridas II for one did not repudiate a barren wife (Hdt. V. 39 f.). For him and his peers, however, *teknopoia* could be subordinated to other considerations. It could not be so as a rule, and this has to be kept in the forefront of the mind as we turn to what appeared to some non-Spartan contemporaries to be extraordinary, and immoral, marital practices.

VIII

It is noteworthy that Aristotle reserved his criticisms of Spartan females for those who had crossed the threshold of matrimony. But at least he austere restricted himself to disparaging their luxury-loving avarice, the power they wielded over their menfolk and their ownership of real property – and this despite his declared abhorrence of adultery (*Nic. Eth.* II. 6, II.6, 1107a10 ff.; *Pol.*

VII. 16, 1335b38–36a2). Rather less self-denying were his inferior successors, who indulged in wild flights of journalistic fantasy. To cite just one of several possible examples, the late lexicographers defined ‘the Spartan way’ alternatively as buggery and pederasty or as the practice whereby the women, who were not closely guarded (cf. [Cicero, *de republica*] IV. 6. 6; [Dionysius Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae*] II. 24. 6), offered themselves sexually to guests or strangers (*xenoi*; cf. perhaps Nik. Dam., *FGrHist* 90F103Z. 6).¹⁰⁹

The factual basis of these allegations appears to have been the various forms of what we might describe as plural marriage and polykoity [multiple unions] attested by Herodotus, Xenophon, Polybius and Plutarch, which are paralleled somewhat in both the ancient and the modern worlds.¹¹⁰ Herodotus, it is true, was firmly convinced that the bigamy of Anaxandridas II was ‘totally unSpartan’ (V. 40. 2; cf. Paus. III. 3. 7), and that may be so.¹¹¹ However, according to Polybius (XII. 6 b. 8), writing in the second century BC, it was an ‘ancestral custom’ and a ‘current practice’ for three or four men (or more if brothers) to share one wife and for their children to be counted as belonging equally to all. Polybius then makes the apparently separate point that, when a man had produced enough children, it was both honourable and customary for him to pass his wife on to a friend.¹¹²

Now the best friend of King Ariston was at first blissfully unaware of this second custom (Hdt. VI. 62), and the adelphic polyandry may have been a temporary expedient in a crisis.¹¹³ But Polybius’ evidence still seems to me valuable for two reasons: first, it makes explicit the notion of female passivity that we saw embedded in the marriage transactions; second, it serves as a reminder that ‘the institutions commonly described as marriage do not all have the same legal and social concomitants’.¹¹⁴ To put it another way, monogamy within what we call the ‘nuclear family’ is only one among many possible variant pairing relationships contrived for the procreation of legitimate offspring and so for the transmission of hereditary private property.¹¹⁵

The potential variety becomes clear from a passage in Xenophon (*Lak. Pol.* 1. 7–9), which is expanded, though with revealing divergencies, by Plutarch (*Lyk.* 15. 11–18). It might happen, says Xenophon, that an old man had a young wife.¹¹⁶ Lykourgos, therefore, in order to abolish jealousy – ‘womanish’ jealousy, in Plutarch – made it legal for such an elderly husband to introduce into his house a younger man whose physique and character he admired, for the latter to beget children by his wife (in a kind of anticipation of our [Artificial Insemination by Donor] system). Xenophon does not say for whom the children are to be begotten, but one assumes (with Plutarch) that it is for the older man, since Xenophon then cites the reverse situation of a man who does not wish to marry and yet does wish to discharge his procreative duty to the state. Such a man – more likely a widower than a confirmed bachelor – was permitted by Lykourgos to select a fertile and distinguished woman, by whom, if he could persuade her husband (literally ‘him who had her’), he

might have children.¹¹⁷

Xenophon's explanation of the latter arrangement is that the wives wish to possess or run (*katechein*) two households, while the husbands wish to obtain for their existing sons brothers who will have no claim on the paternal inheritance.¹¹⁸ It is also, however, worth noting a modern suggestion that these practices are based on the idea attested elsewhere that the 'noble seed' (Plut., *Lyk.* 15. 12) of the warriors should be distributed as widely as possible throughout the community.¹¹⁹ This suggestion is at any rate not contradicted by Xenophon's tantalizing claim to know of many similar pairing arrangements in Sparta. All these were of course in line with the seemingly concerted effort to depreciate family life in Sparta. But, to repeat, depreciation of family life was far from tantamount to depreciation of the family *tout court*.¹²⁰ And the overriding consideration behind these arrangements was reproduction, in particular of legitimate children, in line with the legal compulsion placed on males to marry (above, section V).

It is perhaps significant that Xenophon makes no reference to adultery in Sparta.¹²¹ By contrast, Plutarch (*Lyk.* 15.16; *Mor.* 228BC) felt bound to deny its occurrence explicitly. As far as sexual relationships between citizens are concerned, Plutarch seems to have been technically correct, and this is a remarkable comment on the emphasis laid on the maintenance of the male citizen population. None the less, it is certain that adultery in the sense of sexual intercourse between a citizen and a non-citizen who were not married to each other did occur.

The alleged paternity of the evanescent hero Astrabakos (Hdt. VI. 63–9) and the distinctly corporeal mortal Alkibiades,¹²² in each case involving the wife of a king, do not particularly concern us here. The complex and confused evidence for the so-called Partheniai illuminates Greek attitudes to the proper relationship between the sexes;¹²³ but this mysterious group is attested only in connection with the foundation of Taras (modern Taranto) in c. 706. On the other hand, there is evidence for other specially named categories of men in Sparta which undoubtedly is relevant to the position of Spartan wives in our period. Xenophon (*Hell.* V. 3. 9) refers in a context of 380 B.C. to bastards (*nothoi*). Later sources (Phylarchos, *FGrHist* 81 F 43; Plutarch. *Kleom.* 8. 1; Aelian, *VH* XII. 43) mention the category *mothakes*, to which lexicographers and scholiasts add that of the possibly identical *mothōnes*.

These disparate sources have been collected and well discussed, and the identification of at least some members of these categories as the offspring of Spartan fathers and Helot mothers seems virtually certain.¹²⁴ Such liaisons are at any rate a more cogent explanation for the lack of evidence for female prostitutes in Sparta (at least before the third century)¹²⁵ than alleged 'free love' among the Spartans. We cannot, however, say how frequent such liaisons may have been nor what psychological effect they may have had on Spartan wives – a salutary reminder of the inadequacy of the ancient evidence.

It will be noticed, finally, that very little has been said directly on the subject of gynecocracy (and nothing about 'matriarchal survivals'). My silence is the measure of my disagreement with Aristotle (and Bachofen)¹²⁶ – tempting though it would have been to cite the sixth-century bronze mixing-bowl found at Vix in France as a perfect illustration of Aristotle's view.¹²⁷ To a quintessential sexist like him, however, anything remotely approaching sexual equality, let alone female emancipation, both of which he thought he detected in Sparta, must have seemed like the world turned upside down. Moreover, Aristotle's criticisms really only apply to rich women, who were of course a minority of the women under study here.

But if for once it is easy to set aside the opinions of Aristotle, it is far harder to 'hold the balance with a steady and equal hand' (an expression of Edward Gibbon) in the longstanding controversy over the general social position of Spartan wives in the sixth to fourth centuries BC – not least, as has been shown, because of the nature of the ancient evidence. To be consciously anachronistic, a modern feminist might perhaps approve their equal though separate education, which may have included an intellectual element; their frankness of utterance; their liberating attire; their freedom from sedentary and stultifying domestic chores; their control and management of their household(s); and above all their property-rights. On the other side, however, the modern feminist is unlikely to be over-impressed by the way in which Spartan women were trained to act, and obliged to look, like men; by their restricted or non-existent choice in the matter or manner of acquiring a husband; by the way in which they were 'seized' and 'had' as wives in the domicile of their husbands, who could 'lend' them for extra-marital procreation; finally, and perhaps least of all, by the overriding emphasis placed on their child-bearing potential and maternal roles by men who monopolized the political direction of a peculiarly masculine society.

For what it is worth, my own view coincides roughly, and for rather different reasons, with that of Simone de Beauvoir: 'such examples as Sparta and the Nazi regime prove that [woman] can be none the less oppressed by the males, for all her direct attachment to the State'.¹²⁸ But even if I have failed to persuade readers of this, I hope that I may at least have made them hesitate before seeking to enlist the women of ancient Sparta as allies in the just cause of feminism.

* This essay is essentially a shortened and annotated version of a paper delivered before the Oxford Philological Society in November 1976. I am grateful to those who took part in the ensuing discussion, especially P. Vidal-Naquet and S. G. Pembroke, for helpful comments and criticisms.

† Reprinted from *Classical Quarterly* 31, 1981, 84–105; by permission of the Classical Association, and of the author.

¹ The *O.E.D.* Supp. i (1972) defines 'feminism' as 'advocacy of the rights of women (based on the theory of equality of the sexes)'.

² R. Flacelière, 'D'un certain féminisme grec', *REA* 64 (1962), 109–16, reviewing J. Vogt, *Von der Gleichwertigkeit der Geschlechter in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft der Griechen* (Abh. Akad. Mainz,

1960; idem, 'Le féminisme dans l'ancienne Athènes', *CRAI* (1971), 698–706.

³ By contrast, the women of Liechtenstein voted for the first time in the history of the principality on 17 April 1977.

⁴ G. E. M. de Ste Croix, 'Some observations on the property rights of Athenian women', *CR* n.s. 20 (1970), 273–8, at p. 273.

⁵ Notably in the United States: see e.g. the special issues of *Arethusa* for 1973 (which includes a bibliography by S. B. Pomeroy with D. M. Schaps) and 1978.

⁶ Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (London, 1976) (hereafter Pomeroy).

⁷ W. Reade, *The Martyrdom of Man* (1872, repr. London, 1934), p. 57.

⁸ E. Rawson, *The Spartan Tradition in European Thought* (Oxford, 1969).

⁹ Two contrasting eighteenth-century representatives of this tradition, Helvétius and Rousseau, may raise a smile: Rawson, *op. cit.* pp. 241, 243.

¹⁰ Rawson, p. 10.

¹¹ e.g. Pomeroy, p. 42: 'Dorian women, in contrast to Ionian women, enjoyed many freedoms, and among Dorians the Spartans were the most liberated of all'; cf. below, n. 112.

¹² cf. the opening remarks of R. Just, 'Conceptions of women in Classical Athens', *Journal Anthropological Soc. of Oxford* 6 (1975), 153–70.

¹³ Greek *gynē*, like *femme*, meant both woman and wife: cf. S. C. Humphreys, *JHS* 93 (1973), 258, reviewing C. Vatin, *Recherches sur le mariage et la condition de la femme mariée à l'époque hellénistique* (Paris, 1970).

¹⁴ J. Redfield, 'The women of Sparta', *CJ* 73 (1978), 146–61, in fact says very little on its ostensible subject.

¹⁵ C. N. Degler, *Is there a History of Women?* (Oxford inaugural Lecture, 14 March 1974).

¹⁶ By 'minority' Degler understands 'any group that is differentiated from the majority by some recognizable characteristics, be they physical or social ... In the case of women ... the group has less power than the majority even though it is numerically larger' (p. 20 n. 15); cf. S. de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Paris, 1949; Eng. edn Harmondsworth, 1972), *passim*, esp. pp. 608–39 (hereafter de Beauvoir).

¹⁷ This point will be developed by G. E. M. de Ste Croix in his forthcoming book *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* [(London, 1981)].

¹⁸ F. Ollier, *Le mirage spartiate*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1933–43), i, chaps. 5–6, esp. pp. 164–88; E. N. Tigerstedt, *The Legend of Sparta in Classical Antiquity*, 3 vols. (Stockholm etc., 1965–78), i, 155 f. For Aristotle's treatment of Sparta in general see *ibid.* pp. 280–304; R. A. de Laix, 'Aristotle's conception of the Spartan constitution', *Journal Hist. Philosophy* 12 (1974), 21–30.

¹⁹ T. Besterman, *Voltaire*³ (Oxford, 1976), p. 9.

²⁰ This adverse judgement is restated, with further supporting arguments, at *Pol.* VII. 14, 1333b5–34a10. We might add that Sparta's one-dimensional military ideal, which equated success in war with virtue itself, goes back at least to the time of the Spartan poet Tyrtaios in the *mid-seventh century*.

²¹ The MS. reading [*akolastos*, 'intemperately'] has been questioned, but it is retained in the Oxford Classical Text (ed. W. D. Ross), to whose numeration all my citations refer.

²² de Beauvoir, p. 222.

²³ cf. Plato, *Rep.* VIII. 548B, where this defect is said to be characteristic of a timocracy; clearly Plato has Sparta in mind.

²⁴ The translation of Redfield, *op. cit.* (n. 14) – 'much is managed by women in their regime' – seems indefensible.

²⁵ Some (e.g. Redfield) have taken Aristotle to have meant 'unlike women in other states'; but the prevailing male Greek view since Homer (*Il.* VI. 490–3 = *Od.* I. 356–9) was that war was a man's business; cf. e.g. Thuc. III. 74. 2; Aristoph., *Lys.* 520; and generally Plato, *Alk.* I 126E–127A.

²⁶ The doubt registered by Aristotle's [*phasi*] (rendered here by 'traditionally') presumably concerns the manner whereby the women evaded the laws of Lykourgos. (The latter, if he ever existed, cannot be dated.) Translated into modern historical language, this would amount to asking how the Spartan women became an exception to the rule that 'the segregation and legal and administrative subordination of women received their original impetus from the fragmentation of the early Greek world into small, continuously warring state': K. J. Dover, 'Classical Greek attitudes to sexual behaviour', *Arethusa* 6 (1973), 59–73, at p. 65.

²⁷ For an apologetic account of Aristotle's view see W. W. Fortenbaugh, 'Aristotle on slaves and women', in J. Barnes, M. Schofield, R. Sorabji (eds.), *Articles on Aristotle*, 4 vols. (London, 1977), ii, 135–9.

²⁸ cf. J. J. Keaney, 'The date of Aristotle's *Athenaion Politeia*', *Historia* 19 (1970), 326–36.

²⁹ The unreliable Aelian (*VH* VI. 6), writing in the second/third century AD, says *five* or more.

30 On the *Lak. Pol.* see now W. E. Higgins, *Xenophon the Athenian* (Albany, 1977), pp. 65–75, who dates the whole work to the 350s. The essay was written for a non-Spartan audience and is restricted to those points of contrast between Sparta and other states which in the author's view most accounted for Spartan supremacy.

31 The surviving fragments of this, one of the 158 *Constitutions* compiled by Aristotle and his pupils, are collected by V. Rose in his Teubner edition of Aristotelian fragments (frs.532–45) and by M. R. Dilts in his edition of Herakleides Lembos, *Excerpta Politiarum* (372. 9–373. 13).

32 For a source-critical examination of the *Life* see E. Kessler, *Plutarchs Leben des Lykurgos* (Berlin, 1910). On Plutarch as an interpreter of Sparta see Ollier, op. cit. (n. 18), ii. 165–215; Tigerstedt, op. cit. (n. 18), ii. 226–64.

33 We do not know whether newborn girls were subjected to the ritualistic and/or hygienic wine-baths endured by their brothers (Plut., *Lyk.* 16. 3). Nor do we know if the Spartan wetnurses who acquired something of a cachet outside Sparta (Plut., *Alk.* 1. 3, *Lyk.* 16. 5) were of citizen status. The nannies praised by Plutarch (*Lyk.* 16. 4) were perhaps unfree.

34 W. K. Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece* (London, 1968), p. 197 (hereafter Lacey); Pomeroy, 36. The passage in question also contains a reference to the possibility of abortion (cf. *Mor.* 242c; [Hippokr.], *On the Nature of the Child*, 13. 2); but direct evidence for this (as opposed to infanticide) is non-existent for our period.

35 However, L. R. F. Germain, 'Aspects du droit d'exposition en Grèce', *RD*, 4th ser. 47 (1969), 177–97, at pp. 179 f., doubts whether exposure was frequent in our period.

36 Exposure in Sparta (esp. Plut., *Lyk.* 16. 2): G. Glotz, 'L'exposition des enfants', *Etudes sociales et juridiques sur l'antiquité grecque* (Paris, 1906), pp. 187–27, at pp. 188, 192, and esp. pp. 217–19; P. Roussel, 'L'exposition des enfants à Sparte', *REA* 45 (1943), 5–17. Shortage of women in Sparta: the direct evidence is weak – no spinsters versus attested polyandry and only one known instance of bigamy (below) – but see generally Pomeroy, pp. 227 f. Possibly too infant mortality, which was no doubt high in ancient Greece, affected girls more than boys.

37 Such anecdotes may of course legitimately be construed as retrojections of later practice; but it can be rash to generalize from royal practice and, secondly, Lykourgos' injunction – that his brother's posthumous offspring, if born female, should be handed over to the women – does not entail that she would then be reared, since she might be born deformed or feeble.

38 D. L. Page, *Alcman. The Partheneion* (Oxford, 1951), pp. 66 f., tentatively attributed this homosexuality to the close association between women and girls in cult and in the gymnasia. C. Calame, *Les chœurs de jeunes filles en Grèce archaïque*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1977), i. 433–6, argues that it had an educative function. K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (London, 1978), p. 181, speaks in this connection (following J. Hallett) of 'an overt "sub-culture", or rather "counter-culture, in which women and girls received from their own sex what segregation and monogamy denied them from men'. However, according to Pomeroy, p. 55, 'the most important factor, both at Sparta and at Lesbos, in fostering female homoerotic attachments was that women in both societies were highly valued'.

39 M. P. Nilsson, 'Die Grundlagen des Spartanischen Lebens', *Klio* 12 (1908), 308–40, reprinted in *Opera Selecta*, 3 vols. (Lund, 1951–60), ii. 826–69, at p. 848. See also below, n. 63.

40 Clotheshaking: P. Herfst, *Le travail de la femme dans la Grèce ancienne* (Paris, 1922), pp. 18–24. Cooking: *ibid.* pp. 24–32. Exemption of Spartan women: *ibid.* pp. 112 f. But it was Spartan women who wove the tunic (*chiton*) for Apollo of Amyklai each year (Paus. III. 16. 2).

41 The sixth-century bronze figurines of girl runners from Sparta (Inv. 3305), Delphi (Inv. 3072), Albania (London, B.M. 208) and Dodona (Athens, N. M. Carapanos 24) are very possibly all of Spartan make. The dress of the third, leaving one breast bare, vividly recalls Paus. V. 16. 3 (race between virgins at Olympia in honour of Hera).

42 Calame, op. cit. (n. 38), esp. i. 350–7, has ingeniously reconstructed a Spartan cycle of female initiation conforming to the model of Van Gennep. Hypothetically, this consisted of a complex series of *rites de passage* designed ultimately to confer on the girls full adult status within the civic community, the primary emphasis being placed on their sexuality, marriage and maternity. However, although his case for the initiatory function of at least some aspects of the cults discussed seems well grounded, the reconstruction as a whole remains far from demonstrated.

43 We do, however, learn from Athenaios (XIII. 566E) of mixed wrestling between adolescents on the island of Chios.

44 This idea may lie behind the *ben trovato* apophthegm (Plut., *Mor.* 232c) purporting to explain why Spartan virgins did not wear veils in public, whereas the wives did. For the topic in general see H. North, *Sophrosyne. Self-knowledge and Self-restraint in Greek Literature* (Ithaca, 1966), esp. pp. 68–84 (Euripides), 95 f. (Kritias), 128 and n. 17 (Xenophon), 197–211 (Aristotle).

45 The dress of the women seems to have been no more inhibiting than that of the girls: Plut., *Mor.* 241B; Teles *ap.* [Stobaeus, *Florilegium*] 108. 83 (*anasyramenē* could be translated colloquially as 'flashing').

46 cf. Eur., *Andr.* 597 f., *Hek.* 933 f.; Soph. fr. 788N; Pollux II. 187, 7. 54 f.; Clement, [*Paedagogus*] II. 10. 114. 1. For thighs as an erotogenic feature see Athen. XIII. 602E (though perhaps 'thighs' was a conventional euphemism for a part of the female anatomy which it was literally shameful to reveal). For the way that female clothing has often been deliberately designed to hinder activity see de Beauvoir, p. 190; cf. *ibid.* pp. 323, 429, 442.

47 The series includes the four items cited above (n. 41), together with Athens, N.M. 15897 15900; Berlin (Charlottenburg) 10820, 31084; New York, Met. 38. 11. 3, 06. 11. 04; Paris, Louvre; Sparta Mus. 594, 3302; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Mus. VI 2925, 4979. Th. Karageorgha, *AD* 20. 1 (1965), 96–109, publishes Sparta 3302 with further comparanda; all are discussed in U. Häfner, 'Das Kunstschaffen Lakoniens in archaischer Zeit' (Diss. Münster, 1965); cf. Cl. Rolley, 'Le problème de l'art laconien', *Ktema* 2 (1977), 125–40, at p. 130. They were almost certainly made by men, some of whom could have been Spartan citizens. But the mirrors at least could have been commissioned and/or dedicated by women; cf. below, n. 54. We may add a unique sixth-century Spartan clay *kylix* (cup) on whose interior are depicted three nude and long-haired girls disporting themselves by a river; C. M. Stibbe, *Lakonische Vasenmaler des sechsten Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (Amsterdam, 1972), pp. 133, 280, no. 209.

48 The chief sources are Aristoph. fr. 338, *Lys.* 1105, 1148, 1174, with V. Ehrenberg, *The People of Aristophanes*² (New York, 1962), p. 180 and n. 7; Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 2. 12–14; Plato, *Laws* VIII 836A–C; Plut., *Lyk.* 18. 8 f., *Ages.* 2. 1, *Mor.* 761D; [Cicero, *de republica*] IV. 4. 4; Hesychius, *Suda*, Photius s.v. 'Lakōnikon tropōn' Dover, *op. cit.* (n. 38), pp. 185 ff., seems to me somewhat to understate this feature of Spartan society.

49 I suspect, however, that the alleged Spartan practice of stripping virgins in front of foreigners or guest-friends (*xenoi*: Athen. XIII. 566E) is pure invention.

50 See below, n. 72.

51 On the apophthegms – those attributed to Spartan women are Plut., *Mor.* 240C–242D – see Tigerstedt, *op. cit.* ii. 16–30. Contrast the conventional male Athenian attitude to free public speech for women: Soph., *Ajax* 293; Eur., *Her.* 476 f., fr. 61; Thuc. II. 45. 2, 46.

52 D. Wender, 'Plato: misogynist, paedophile and feminist', *Arethusa* 6 (1973), 75–90.

53 But see D. M. MacDowell's edition of *Wasps* (Oxford, 1971) ad loc.

54 From the late seventh century onwards we have ex-votos from Sparta inscribed with the name of a dedicatrix. Since the recipient deities were also female and a fair proportion of the uninscribed offerings have feminine associations, many of the dedications were probably offered by women. However, the names of only about a dozen Spartan women are attested epigraphically in our period (the corresponding figure for men is about a hundred), as against about fifty in the literary sources.

55 See my 'Literacy in the Spartan oligarchy', *JHS* 98 (1978), 25–37, where I also discuss brachylogy.

56 The position of Roman women, at least those of the highest social class, seems to me parallel in this respect: cf. D. Daube, *Civil Disobedience in Antiquity* (Edinburgh, 1972), pp. 23 ff.

57 For a succinct exposition of the structure of Spartan society as it had been remodelled by the fifth century see M. I. Finley, 'Sparta', in *The Use and Abuse of History* (London, 1975), pp. 161–77.

58 Esp. *Od.* XIII. 412 (the only use of the adjective *kalligynaika* [, 'of the beautiful women,'] in the *Odyssey*); and the probably seventh-century oracle discussed in H. W. Parke and D. E. W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle*², 2 vols. (Oxford, 1956), i. 82 f., ii, no. 1; also Theopompas, *FGrHist* 115F240; Herakleides Lembos *ap.* Athen. XIII. 566A. Such internal estimation and praise by outsiders are remarkable given the universal Greek 'cult of beauty': E. J. Bickerman, 'Love story in the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite', *Athenaeum* n.s. 54 (1976), 229–54, at p. 231.

59 We are not told whether Lampito had suckled children, but it is a fair assumption that she had. The Athenian Lysistrata might therefore have been envious that Lampito's breasts had not lost their shape.

60 The best discussion, with full modern bibliography, of Alkman's maiden-songs is Calame, *op. cit.*

61 For the latter cf. Aristoph., *Lys.* 1312 and the cup (above, n. 47).

62 e.g. Hesiod, *Op.* 695–8; [Hippokr.], *Peri Parthenōn* I. 16; Plato, *Rep.* V 460E–461A, *Laws* VI. 785B; Arist., *Pol.* VII. 16, 1334b29 ff.; cf. Aristoph., *Lys.* 595–7; Xen., *Oec.* 7. 4 f. For comparative Roman evidence cf. M. K. Hopkins, 'The age of Roman girls at marriage', *Population Studies* 18 (1965), 309–27; *idem.* 'On the probable age structure of the Roman population', *ibid.* 20 (1966), 245–64, esp. pp. 260–4 (important methodologically).

63 However, as is correctly observed by R Vidal-Naquet, 'Les jeunes. Le cru. L'enfant grec et le cuît', in J. Le Goff and P. Nora (eds.), *Faire de l'histoire*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1974), iii. 137–68, at p. 160, 'what we know of [the Spartan girl's] infancy and adolescence looks less like a preparation, punctuated by rituals,

for marriage than a carbon copy of masculine institutions'.

⁶⁴ D. Daube, *The Duty of Procreation* (Edinburgh, 1977), p. 11, suggests that they were introduced c. 500 B.C. to strengthen the male citizen population in the face of the growing Persian threat. If the dating is correct, this was no doubt part of their motivation; but a greater one may have been fear of the size of the native Greek serf population, the Helots.

⁶⁵ D. W. Amundsen and C. J. Diers, 'The age of menarche in classical Greece', *Human Biology* 41 (1969), 125–32; cf. J. L. Angel, 'Ecology and population in the eastern Mediterranean', *World Archaeology* 4 (1972), 88–105, at p. 97.

⁶⁶ C. T. Seltman, *Women in Antiquity* (London, 1956), p. 80.

⁶⁷ See e.g. C. M. Tazelaar, Παιδες και Ἐφηβοι: some notes on the Spartan stages of youth', *Mnemosyne*, 4th ser. 20 (1967), 127–53.

⁶⁸ Lacey, p. 318 n. 50. This figure is at least not contradicted by the evidence mustered in M. E. White, 'Some Agiad dates: Pausanias and his sons', *JHS* 84 (1984), 140–52, although Professor White herself thinks the men married at thirty. For a range of overlapping ideas on the proper age for a Greek man to marry see Solon fr. 27. 9 f. West; Plato, *Laws* 6. 772DE; Arist., *Pol.* VII. 16, 133 5328–30.

⁶⁹ This seems to me to contradict the view of Bickerman, 'La conception du mariage à Athènes', [*Bullettino dell'Istituto di Diritto romano*], 3rd ser. 17 (1976), 1–28, at p. 2, that 'the Athenians, and doubtless all the civilized peoples around the Mediterranean, regarded marriage, in the age of Plato, simply as a family affair in which the State was not involved'. But I agree with the main thesis of this article, that the chief purpose of Greek marriage was to establish legitimacy of offspring and so rights of succession to hereditary private property. For the Roman conception of marriage see G. Williams, 'Some aspects of Roman marriage ceremonies and ideals', *JRS* 48 (1958), 16–30.

⁷⁰ Plato, *Laws* VII. 804D, 11. 923A; Arist., *Pol.* 7. 16, 1334b29 ff., 1335b28 f. For Sparta see Plut., *Lyk.* 15. 14, *Pyrrhus* 28. 6, *Mor.* 223A.

⁷¹ Statue (Sparta Inv. 364): J. Boardman, *Greek Sculpture: the Archaic period* (London, 1978), p. 62, fig. 80. Terracottas: R. M. Dawkins (ed.), *Artemis Orthia* (*JHS Supp.* V, London, 1929), p. 51 and fig. 29.

⁷² In the light of epigraphical evidence (*IG* V. 1. 713–14, and perhaps 824), Plut., *Lyk.* 27. 2 ('priestesses in office') has been emended by K. Latte to read 'women in childbed'. Pomeroy, p. 36 and n. 8 adopts this reading, but it should be pointed out that it has no MS. support.

⁷³ P. Leigh Fermor, *Mani* (London, 1958), p. 69. Rawson, op. cit. (n. 8), pp. 292, 321, 358, cites sources representing the Maniotes as Spartans *redivivos*.

⁷⁴ op. cit. (n. 58), esp. pp. 237, 244, 247.

⁷⁵ The connection between beauty and marriage, at least royal marriage, at Sparta was so strong that Plutarch (*Mor.* ID) misrepresents a story told by Theophrastos about Archidamos II (reigned c. 469–27) being fined for marrying a small woman (Plut., *Ages.* 2. 6). In the former passage the ground of guilt has become the wife's ugliness.

⁷⁶ For the existence of a true Spartan aristocracy see P. Oliva, *Sparta and her Social Problems* (Amsterdam and Prague, 1971), pp. 118–22, 136; on 'privileged families' at Sparta see G. E. M. de Ste Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War* (London, 1972), pp. 137 f., 353 f., following K. M. T. Chrimes, *Ancient Sparta* (Manchester, 1949), esp. chaps. 3–6, 10–11.

⁷⁷ M. I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus*² (London, 1977), p. 103; L. Gernet, 'Mariages de tyrans', in *Anthropologie de la Grèce antique* (Paris, 1968), pp. 344–59.

⁷⁸ Although a 'descendant of Herakles' by birth (Plut., *Lys.* 2. 1), Lysander seems to have risen to political prominence from a lowly economic station.

⁷⁹ We should not be deceived either by Xenophon's rhetorical question (*Lak. Pol.* 7. 3) – 'what need was there to worry about wealth in a society where equal contributions to the mess and a uniform standard of living excluded the search for wealth in order to obtain luxury?' – or by Plutarch's assertion (*Lyk.* 10. 4) that under the 'Lykourgan' regime wealth was deprived of its very being and became as it were blind.

⁸⁰ For a fuller discussion of the Spartan property-regime see my *Sparta and Lakonia* (London, 1979), chap. 10; and for the catastrophic decline in male citizen numbers between 480 and 371, *ibid.* chap. 14.1 cannot agree with many of the conclusions of J. Christien, 'La loi d'Épistadeus: un aspect de l'histoire économique et sociale à Sparte', *RD*, 4th ser. 52 (1974), 197–221.

⁸¹ op. cit. (n. 4), 273 f.

⁸² *SiG³*, 306. 4–9, 48–57; cf. *IG* V. 2. 159 (fifth century BC).

⁸³ A. J. Toynbee, *Some Problems of Greek History* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 329–37; G. L. Huxley, 'Crete in Aristotle's *Politics*', *GRBS* 12 (1971), 505–15, at pp. 513 f.

⁸⁴ The standard edition, with translation, of the Gortyn Code is R. F. Willetts, *The Law Code of Gortyn* (Berlin, 1967); cf. U. Paoli, 'L'antico diritto di Gortina', in *Altri studi di diritto greco e romano* (Milan,

1976), pp. 481–507.

⁸⁵ H. J. Wolff, *RE* XXIII, s.v. *προις* (1957), cols. 133–70, at cols. 166 f. Contrast D. M. Schaps, *Economic Rights of Women in Ancient Greece* (Edinburgh, 1979), pp. 43 f., 88. However, as Schaps himself observes, ‘our other evidence seems to support the conclusion that Spartan women were indeed possessors of wealth in their own right’ (p. 88; cf. 6, 7, 12 f.); and he appositely cites Xen., Ages. 9. 6 (the wealth in racehorses owned by Kyniska, sister of Agesilaos II; cf. p. 117 n. 87).

⁸⁶ Hermippos fr. 87; Plut., *Mor.* 227F; cf. 242B; Aelian *VH* VI. 6; Justin III.3.8.

⁸⁷ Philo’s evidence is doubted, though without adequate reason, by W. Erdmann, *Die Ehe im alten Griechenland* (Munich, 1934), pp. 183–5. C. Jannet, *Les institutions sociales et le droit civile à Sparte*² (Paris, 1880), p. 95, argued that such marriages would have been excluded in practice, but his argument rested on two false assumptions exemplifying the tendency to regard ‘Greek law’ as a unitary system: first, that the Athenian *anchisteia* rule, whereby an heiress was bound to marry her nearest male kin, ‘existed in Sparta in all its rigour’ (p. 91); secondly, that daughters had no share in the paternal inheritance.

⁸⁸ On incest generally see e.g. R. Fox, *Kinship and Marriage* (Harmondsworth, 1967), pp. 54–76.

⁸⁹ cf. Ste Croix, ‘Athenian family law’, *CR* n.s. 20 (1970), 307–10, at p. 309, reviewing A. R. W. Harrison, *The Law of Athens: the Family and Property* (Oxford, 1968); also de Beauvoir, pp. 40, 111.

⁹⁰ Lacey, p. 201.

⁹¹ The topics considered in the foregoing section may usefully be reviewed in the light of comparative evidence from J. Goody, J. Thirsk, E. P. Thompson (eds.), *Family and inheritance. Rural society in Western Europe 1200–1800* (Cambridge, 1976), esp. J. Goody, ‘Inheritance, property and women: some comparative considerations’, pp. 10–36.

⁹² The fundamental study of *engye* is now Bickerman, op. cit. (n. 69): ‘it is the institution of *engye* which gives Athenian marriage its peculiar character’ (p. 8). The usage of Herodotus is ambiguous: either he believed (wrongly) that Athenian *engye* existed at Sparta; or, as Bickerman, *ibid.* pp. 19 f., suggests, he meant that an ‘affianced’ heiress could not be married against her wishes to another man. The latter seems the more likely. Since *engye* was specifically Athenian, Bickerman speaks of *accordailles* at Sparta, to convey that such arrangements did not necessarily imply legitimacy for any future offspring. Such *accordailles*, however, were apparently legally binding (Plut., *Lys.* 30. 6).

⁹³ The existence of the *kyrieia* at Sparta is denied by Bickerman, *ibid.*, who rightly observed (p. 2.0) that ‘the position of the woman at Sparta was quite different from that of the Athenian woman’. A *non liquet* is registered by T. W. Beasley, ‘The *kyrios* in Greek states other than Athens’, *CR* 20 (1906), 210–13, at pp. 212 f.

⁹⁴ The difficulty of meaning in the passage of Xenophon stems from the ambiguity of [*anandria* (‘cowardice’; literally ‘lack of manliness’)]. See J. M. Moore, *Aristotle and Xenophon on Democracy and Oligarchy* (London, 1975), p. 85. [Xenophon’s Greek can be translated either ‘answer to them for the disadvantages his cowardice, *anandria*, inflicts on them’, or ‘answer to them for the fact that they are unmarried’, literally ‘manless’, *anandria*.] I do not think my interpretation in the text is contradicted by Xenophon’s omission of women from the list of items controlled by a man (*Lak. Pol.* 6. 1). See also below, nn. 112, 117.

⁹⁵ I put ‘engaged’ in inverted commas because [*harmosamenos*] should technically mean ‘having got married but not yet having consummated the marriage’.

⁹⁶ On ‘marriage by capture’ see e.g. L. Mair, *Marriage* (Harmondsworth, 1970), pp. 110 ff. (chiefly African).

⁹⁷ C. N. Starcke, *The Primitive Family in its Origin and Development* (London, 1889), p. 19.

⁹⁸ cf. Finley, ‘Anthropology and the Classics’, in op. cit. (n. 57), pp. 102–19, esp. PP. 116 f.; ‘what anthropology illuminates about Sparta, paradoxically, are certain aspects of her lost early history rather than the Sparta from which the fossilized evidence comes’.

⁹⁹ Erdmann, op. cit. (n. 87), pp. 199 f., with the review by H. J. Rose, *JHS* 55 (1935), 256 f.

¹⁰⁰ cf. de Beauvoir, pp. 106, 394, 396.

¹⁰¹ M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste von religiöser Bedeutung mit Ausschluss der athenischen* (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 371 f.

¹⁰² This prohibition is directly attested only in the Aristotelian *Lak. Pol.* as excerpted by Herakleides Lembos (373.13 Dilts); but it is implied in Lucian, *Fugitivi* 27; and perhaps also Xenophon of Ephesos *V.* 1.7. (I owe this reference to Ewen Bowie.)

¹⁰³ See my ‘Hoplites and heroes: Sparta’s contribution to the technique of ancient warfare’, *JHS* 97 (1977), 11–27, at P. 15 and n.39. It is true, as is pointed out by Vidal-Naquet, op. cit. (n. 63), p. 159, that this does not constitute a *rite de passage* in the same sense as the dedication of severed locks; but adolescent Spartan boys, like the married women, wore their hair close-cropped.

¹⁰⁴ L. Gernet, *Le génie grec dans la religion* (Paris, 1933), p. 40; M. Delcourt, *Hermaphrodite. Mythes et rites de la bisexualité dans l'antiquité classique* (Paris, 1958), pp. 7, 11 (with bibliography on p. 132).

¹⁰⁵ G. Devereux, 'Greek pseudo-homosexuality and the "Greek Miracle"', *SO* 42 (1967), 69–92, at pp. 76, 84. For Spartan homosexuality see above, n. 48.

¹⁰⁶ As Lacey, p. 200, remarks, initial secrecy would have been facilitated if marriages in Sparta generally occurred in the winter months, as they seem to have done in the rest of Greece (Arist., *Pol.* VII. 16. 1335337–9).

¹⁰⁷ The references are given by A. H. Griffiths, 'Alkman's *Partheneion*: the morning after the night before', *QUCC* 14 (1972), 1–30, at pp. 10 f.; but he has not convinced me that the most famous of Alkman's maiden-songs (fr. 1 Page) is really an *epitbalamion*.

¹⁰⁸ Nilsson, op. cit. (n. 39), p. 855; Lacey, p. 318 n. 56; Bickerman, op. cit. (n. 58), 232 f., suggests that such marriages are quite regular in agrarian societies.

¹⁰⁹ The office of *Gynaikonomos* (Controller of Women) is not attested in Sparta before the reign of Trajan, but the earliest references to the magistracy as such are in Aristotle's *Politics*: see generally C. Wehrli, 'Les gynéconomes', *MH* 19 (1962), 33–8. I can make nothing of the 'Lakonian key' first attested in Aristophanes (*Thesm.* 423), which apparently worked only from the outside: I. M. Barton, 'Tranio's Lakonian key', *GR*, 2nd ser. 19 (1972), 25–31.

¹¹⁰ Hdt. IV. 104; Arist. *Pol.* II. 3. 1262320 ff.; Caesar, [*Gallie War*] V. 14 f.; Strabo XI. 9. 1, C515, XVI. 4. 25, C783. For the modern world see Starcke, op. cit. (n. 97), pp. 128–40.

¹¹¹ See J. H. Thiel, 'De feminarum apud Dores condicione. ii', *Mnemosyne* n.s. 58 (1930), 402–9, at p. 403 (this article is devoted to plural marriage and polykoity).

¹¹² This of course could imply the existence of the *kyrieia*. Pomeroy, p. 37, however, finds it 'easier to believe that the women also initiated their own liaisons, whether purely for pleasure or because they accepted the society's valuation of childbearing'.

¹¹³ This suggestion is borne out by the context in which the polyandry [multiple husbands] is introduced by Polybius, the mixed marriages between slave men and free women at the time of the foundation of Lokroi in southern Italy c. 700 BC.

¹¹⁴ E. R. Leach, 'Polyandry, inheritance and the definition of marriage', reprinted in J. Goody (ed.), *Kinship* (Harmondsworth, 1971), pp. 151–62, at p. 154. The Spartan system, incidentally, does not contradict Leach's hypothesis that polyandry 'is consistently associated with systems in which women as well as men are the bearers of property-rights'.

¹¹⁵ in addition to Leach, op. cit., see R. N. Adams, 'An inquiry into the nature of the family', in G. E. Dole and R. L. Carneiro (eds.), *Essays in the Science of Culture in honor of Leslie A. White* (New York, 1960), pp. 30–49.

¹¹⁶ The only attested instance is Kleonymos (uncle of Areus I, who reigned 309–265) with Chilonis (Plut., *Pyrrhus* 27. 17–19, 28. 5 f.). The simplest explanation of such marriages is that the man is remarrying on the death (frequently perhaps in childbirth) of his first wife.

¹¹⁷ Plutarch (*Mor.* 242B) has the same idea that the husband must be persuaded, but here the emphasis is laid upon the wife's duty of obedience in the first instance to her father and thereafter to her husband – again, the *kyrieia* seems to be implied.

¹¹⁸ We might add that, if a daughter were produced, she and the existing son(s) would be *homomatrioi* and so, following Philo (n. 87), entitled to marry. They would thus unite in the succeeding generation the property of their married parents with that of the extra-marital partner.

¹¹⁹ W. Den Boer, *Lakonian Studies* (Amsterdam, 1954), pp. 216 f.

¹²⁰ Lacey, pp. 207 f. However, Lacey's study is misleading to the extent that it equates the Greek *oikos* (household) with our 'family' and employs an ideal-typical model of 'the family in the city-state', as if this had everywhere in Greece served the same functions and had the same history.

¹²¹ But his strained attempt to prove that Spartan men were more modest even than the women (*Lak. Pol.* 3. 4 f.) suggests that the accusation of female indiscipline (*anesis*) in Sparta was already current.

¹²² Xen., *Ages.* 4. 5; Plut, *Alk.* 23. 7–9, *Ages.* 3. 1 ff., *Mor.* 467F; Anon. ap. Athen. XIII. 574CD (= Kock. *Comicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, iii. p. 398).

¹²³ S. G. Pembroke, 'Locres et Tarente: le rôle des femmes dans la fondation de deux colonies grecques', *Annales (ESC)* 25 (1970), 1240–70; P. Vidal-Naquet, 'Esclavage et gynécocratie dans la tradition, le mythe, l'utopie', in C. Nicolet (ed.), *Recherches sur les structures sociales dans l'Antiquité classique* (Paris, 1970), pp. 63–80, at pp. 72–5.

¹²⁴ D. Lotze, 'Mothakes', *Historia* 11 (1962), 427–35, followed in the main by Toynbee, op. cit., pp. 343–6; and Oliva, op. cit. pp. 174–7.

¹²⁵ Athen. XIII. 574CD, 591F; Clement, *Paedagogus* II. 10. 105. 2. There is a single representation of flute-girls in sixth-century Lakonian vase painting (Stibbe, op. cit. pp. 243, 279, no. 191), but this probably

owes more to artistic convention than real Spartan life.

¹²⁶ cf. Pembroke, 'Women in charge: the function of alternatives in early Greek tradition and the ancient idea of matriarchy', *JWI* 30 (1967), pp. 1–35. Sparta in our period certainly does not meet C. G. Thomas' acceptable definition of a matriarchal society as 'one in which women enjoy recognizable economic, social and religious privileges which, in sum, give them greater authority than men': 'Matriarchy in early Greece: the Bronze and Dark Ages', *Arethusa* 6 (1973), 173–95.

¹²⁷ This huge vessel (1.64 m high) is of disputed origin, but a cogent case for manufacture in Sparta can be made out; for some recent bibliography on this controversy see Roiley, *op. cit.* (n. 47), 131 f., 139. Around its neck there progresses a stately file of armed men; above them, in the form of a lid-handle, rises the crowning figure of a demure, draped woman.

¹²⁸ de Beauvoir, p. 89; cf. pp. 120 f., 143, 157, 174, 189, 446, 598.

8 Religion in Public Life†

ROBERT PARKER

From ritual we turn to the role of religion in public life. Every state had cults that served as a focus of national identity, but Sparta was unusual in worshipping the founder of its constitution as a god.¹ Could one eat meat from the annual sacrifice to Lycurgus, and then with a good conscience express dissatisfaction with the Spartan way of life? What most impressed other Greeks, though, was the semi-divinity that hedged the Spartan kings. Herodotus looked to barbarian lands for parallels, and Xenophon spoke of the ‘more than mortal honours’ of a Spartan royal funeral. The funerals indeed reveal that the laws of Lycurgus ‘honour the kings not as mortals but as heroes’.² Both kings could trace their descent straight back step by step to Heracles and thus to Zeus himself. They are the only historical Greeks who enter the pages of Herodotus to such a genealogical fanfare.³ The Pythia in 427 urged the Spartans to ‘bring home the seed of the semi-divine son of Zeus’ by restoring the exiled Pleistoanax, and Xenophon in the *Cyropaedia* is no doubt echoing Spartan ideology when he emphasises how heartening it is to follow a king descended from a god. Not surprisingly, the kings held priesthoods of their royal ancestor, and were associated symbolically with his twin sons the Dioscuri.⁴ The controversies that surrounded the exile and recall of King Pleistoanax, and the accession of Agesilaus, are instructive: at a certain level of belief, the whole well-being of Sparta depended on the king, and if an unentitled person occupied the royal seat military disaster and famine might follow. Conversely, a good king by his death could save the state, as did Leonidas at Thermopylae. There were strong inhibitions against doing violence to such sacred persons.⁵

As we have seen, the kings had a central ceremonial role in the conduct of public rites. Regular rituals relating to their royal office were therefore unnecessary; but the installation of a king could be accompanied by elaborate ceremonial – Pleistoanax was brought back ‘amid the same choruses and sacrifices as when they first founded Lacedaemon and established the kings’⁶ – and royal funerals were surely among the most spectacular pageants that the Peloponnese ever saw.⁷ Fixed numbers of *perioikoi* and helots from all Laconia converged on Sparta to join a man and a woman from every Spartiate household; and, says Herodotus, ‘when they are all assembled, many thousands of them with the women too, they beat their brows enthusiastically and lament without ceasing’. Subsequently all public business remained suspended for ten days. Nothing brings out the realities of hierarchy and power as well as a funeral. The royal corpse became a symbol of regal

authority for the Spartiates, of Spartan authority for the subject classes; representatives of every class, including helots and *perioikoi* who perhaps never normally visited the capital, were summoned to Sparta to do it forced homage. Such pomp was, obviously, in sharp and deliberate contrast to the simple exequies of ordinary Spartans.

The welfare of the king was of public concern. Demaratus received his name, 'prayed for by the people', because the Spartiates *en masse* had prayed for a child to be born to his father King Ariston. By an obvious corollary, there were religious sanctions against opposition to the royal authority. Any Spartiate who resisted the king's right to lead out the army wherever he wished was 'to be held in the curse', says Herodotus. Public curses against subversive crimes were a commonplace in Greek states, but usually it was the authority of the laws or the magistrates that they protected rather than of a king. It is tantalising to know so little of an institution that must have given expression to central Spartan values. Just one further possible provision is mentioned: Plutarch's Lyscurgus made it 'accursed' for a master to exact from a helot more than a fixed due of agricultural produce.⁸

Because of their central ceremonial role, the kings were also closely involved with public divination. The gods spoke to the Spartans through the public sacrifices. Thus did Talthybius indicate his anger at the murder of Xerxes' heralds, and set in train the quest for two Spartiates willing to 'die for their fatherland' to appease him; later the first warning of the conspiracy of Cinadon was given by the same means.⁹ It is surely significant that no comparable incident can be cited in Athenian history, even though omens were taken at all the very numerous public sacrifices. At Sparta, the first recipients of these divine messages, apart from the seers themselves, were of course the kings.

They were not, however, the only Spartans who could engage in influential divination. The power to consult the gods was diffused among the decision-making bodies of the state, just as power itself was. Spartans loved oracles, more perhaps than did the citizens of any other Greek state, and granted them an unusual importance in political debate. Had not their own constitution been prescribed by Apollo of Delphi himself? And had not Lyscurgus learnt to rely on Apollo from the example of King Minos, who ruled Crete through the prophetic advice that he received as a 'communer with mighty Zeus'? The dual kingship too had received the sanction of the Pythia.¹⁰ Oracles of every kind – fresh Delphic responses, 'sleepers' and 'floaters' – all on occasion had their influence. Demaratus was deposed and Pleistoanax was recalled in consequence of advice from Delphi; the debate surrounding the accession of a third king, Agesilaus, centred on a floating oracle which warned against a 'lame kingship'; and according to Herodotus it was in obedience to an unwelcome Delphic command that the Spartans expelled their good friend Hippias from Athens, since they 'put the god above human considerations'.¹¹ And these are only the most spectacular examples.¹²

Delphic Apollo was closely associated with the kings. The *Pythioi*, permanent officials whose job it was to consult Delphi on public business – a post known only from Sparta – were royal appointees and shared the kings' tent, and the kings kept official archives of past responses into which they could dip at need. This does not necessarily mean, though, that the kings could consult the oracle on their own initiative about matters of public importance, and then expect the ephors and assembly to bow to the god's will. On the contrary, the many references to questions put by 'the Spartans' suggest that the decision to dispatch the *Pythioi* about a public question was normally taken publicly.¹³ And the ephors had means of divination of their own. Once every nine years, they observed the heavens on a clear night. If a shooting star appeared, it was a sign that the king had committed a religious offence and should be deposed. A similar ritual of observing the heavens is attested for Athens: the issue there, however, was whether a religious mission should be dispatched to Delphi.¹⁴

If this star-gazing could only occasionally have influence, the ephors appear also to have frequented *ex officio* the incubation-oracle of Pasiphae at Thalamae. A dream sent to an ephor who was sleeping on official business will have had weight; but it is obvious how liable an ephor's dreams were to reflect his own daytime sense of what was good for the state. We see from Plutarch's *Agis and Cleomenes* that both these modes of divination had their importance in the revolutionary crisis of the third century BC. A fine inscription from Pasiphae's shrine seems to record a dedication made by a Spartan elder, in consequence of a prophecy given by the goddess to an ephor. It is true that in the fourth century the Athenian state patronised the incubation-oracle of Amphiaraus on issues of some importance – indeed they patronised the god to the extent of awarding him a golden crown for services rendered, as if he had been one of their own demagogues; but it is doubtful whether they would ever have allowed an oracle quite such broad potential for influence over political as well as religious affairs as did the Spartans.¹⁵

Military divination was even more important.¹⁶ Behind a Spartan army there trotted a mixed herd of sacrificial animals, ready for use to test the will of the gods at any time.¹⁷ The only two foreigners ever to be granted citizenship were the Iamid seer Tisamenus and his brother, says Herodotus, so eager were the Spartans for the advice of this still untried young man. The gamble paid off, and Tisamenus 'helped them to win five great competitions' in battle.¹⁸ Most striking of all, there are the many cases of plans altered and even campaigns abandoned because of the disfavour of the gods. This is not a phenomenon confined to the Spartans – witness the disastrous Athenian response to the eclipse at Syracuse in 413 – and it is very plausible that our impression of Athenian attitudes would be very different if they had conducted more campaigns on land, under generals of the same cast of mind as Nicias and Xenophon. But as it is the Spartan evidence is uniquely abundant, and they alone seem to have had the obstacle of crossing-sacrifices

to surmount before leaving their own territory.

Cleomenes in 494 set out to invade the Argolid by land; but the omens at the river Erasinus proved unpropitious, and he was obliged to send his force round to Tiryns by sea. On three separate occasions during the Peloponnesian War invasions of the Argolid were actually abandoned because of unpropitious border-sacrifices, and the troops marched back home.¹⁹ Earth tremors too caused campaigns to be abandoned in mid-course in 426, 414 and? 402, while in 413/412 the commander of a proposed expedition was changed, and the size of his force reduced by a half.²⁰

While a Spartan army was in enemy territory, consultative sacrifices were very regularly performed before undertaking any fresh initiative.²¹ Agesilaus was deterred in 396 from marching further inland and later from crossing the Maeander, and Agesipolis in 388/387 abandoned the project of building a fort in the Argolid and returned home.²² Omens might hold back the day of joining battle or beginning a siege,²³ and even when pitched battle was imminent final sacrifices were performed to determine the right moment for marching out. At Plataea the Spartans supposedly had to stand unresisting under heavy fire from the approaching Persians until, by a desperate prayer to Hera, Pausanias at last secured the omens for an advance.²⁴

And finally the extraordinary story of Cleomenes' trial well shows the weight that Spartans were believed to attach to religious factors in warfare. Denounced on a charge of sparing Argos through a bribe, Cleomenes explained with fine precision the divine signs that had convinced him that he could not take the city. Having captured a grove called Argos, he suspected that the Delphic prophecy that he was to 'take Argos' had been already fulfilled. When he sacrificed in the Heraeum to test the matter further, fire blazed from the chest of the goddess' image. Had it come from the head, that would have meant that he would capture the city 'from the top'; fire from the chest indicated that he had achieved all that the god wished. According to Herodotus, 'the Spartiates found this a convincing and plausible defence, and he got off easily'.²⁵

Xenophon had a detailed description of the preliminary sacrifices and crossing-sacrifices which finely illustrates the meticulous symbolism of a Spartan ritual:

The king first sacrifices while still at home to Zeus the Leader and the gods associated with him [reading doubtful]. If he gets good omens here, the fire-carrier takes fire from the altar and leads the way to the borders of the land. The king sacrifices there too to Zeus and Athena. When the sacrifices to both these gods produce good omens he crosses the borders of the land. And the fire from these sacrifices leads the way and is never put out, and all kinds of sacrificial animals follow.

Xenophon goes on to explain that the king sacrifices before dawn, 'wishing to forestall the gods' favour', but he emphasises that this is a public ceremonial

attended by company commanders, allied generals and two ephors. 'When the rites are completed the king calls them all over and issues instructions.' And he concludes: 'Seeing all this you would think that other peoples are improvisers in soldiering while the Spartans are the only craftsmen in warfare.' Such is Xenophon's unexpected diagnosis of the key point in Spartan military professionalism.²⁶

The importance of such rites is manifest from this account. Xenophon seems to take it for granted that they will be performed, and we may assume that a king or general who regularly neglected the crossing-sacrifices would have risked most dangerous unpopularity, even if he remained within the law.²⁷ It is very striking that only one minor instance of a Spartan commander simply disregarding omens seems to be recorded.²⁸ And yet, insistent though Xenophon is that this is a truly public examination of entrails, there is no doubt that the dominant figure at the ceremony is the king. In this passage Xenophon simply fails to mention the professional seer who must have provided the formal interpretation of the sacrifice.²⁹ The rite was in theory public and objective, in practice under the close supervision of the king; the army was assured that its leader was following the guiding hand of the gods, but the whole conduct of the ceremony lessened the likelihood of serious conflict between human and divine will.

Military divination has often puzzled and embarrassed modern historians. Almost every incident of a campaign abandoned or an attack postponed because of unpromising omens has received a rationalising explanation from one scholar or another.³⁰ As it happens, allegations that the sacrifices were being manipulated in a particular case were sometimes made by the ancients themselves. Such things were even said by and about the pious Xenophon.³¹ No one, however, who reads the whole of his works can seriously doubt this general's committed faith in divination. As he explains in a passage to which many a Spartan king or general might have given assent:

If anyone is surprised that I have so often prescribed that one should act 'with the gods', it is certain that he will be less surprised if he often comes into danger, and if he realises that in a war enemies plot against one another but seldom know whether these plots are well-laid. It is impossible to find any other advisers in such matters except the gods. They know everything, and give signs to those they wish to through sacrifices, birds of omen, voices and dreams.³²

Often quite elaborate hypotheses have to be constructed to make the rationalising explanations work. Whose interests could it serve in 419, for instance, to summon the *perioikoi* for a secret expedition, march out 'no one knew whither', disband the army on the borders of Argos on the pretence that the crossing-sacrifices were adverse, and re-assemble a force for a second expedition against Argos later in the year?³³ In recent years, therefore, there has been more willingness to take the ancient sources on these matters at their

word.³⁴

But if the scepticism of the sceptics has been shown up as dogmatic, there is something simplistic about the faith of the believers. They tend to overestimate the real objectivity of techniques of divination. The king or general decided when the gods should be consulted and what enquiry should be put to them. The gods' message had to be elicited from the voiceless liver through interpretation by a seer; and the seer is likely to have shared the commander's presumptions about the kind of advice that the gods could reasonably be seeking to convey.³⁵ (Pious Greeks did not 'believe because it was absurd', but expected the gods to show good strategic sense.)³⁶ Above all, if the omens from a first sacrifice were discouraging, it was the king's decision whether to perform it again in hope of something better or to abandon the enterprise. Unless there were unusually strict restrictions on the repetition of crossing-sacrifices, they would always have come right in the end for a sufficiently determined leader.³⁷

Divination, therefore, left room for manoeuvre even to the pious. What mattered above all was the king's strength of will and confidence in his cause. Cleomenes accepted the indication of the omens that he should not cross the Erasinus – but instead of marching home he sent his troops round by sea.³⁸ There were perhaps certain phenomena, above all earth tremors, that would cow almost any Spartan, but even here an exception can be found. In 388/387 Agesipolis led an army into the Argolid, confident in the support that had been promised him by Zeus and Apollo, in response to a little diplomatic questioning. Xenophon takes up the story:

While [Agesipolis] was having dinner on the first evening in Argive territory, and the after-dinner libations were being performed, the god shook the earth. The Spartans, starting with the staff of the public mess-tent, all struck up the paean to Poseidon [how much that phrase tells of Spartan piety, discipline and willingness to sing] and the rest of the army expected to depart, because, on a previous occasion when an earth tremor occurred, Agis had led the army back from Elis. But Agesipolis said that, if the tremor had occurred while he was still on his way to invade, he would have believed that the god was seeking to prevent him; but since it came after he had invaded he thought the god was encouraging him. And so on the next day he sacrificed to Poseidon and led them not far into the country.³⁹

This fine distinction had escaped previous Spartan kings, who in similar circumstances had led an invading army home; but having received the approval of Apollo and his father Zeus for his expedition, Agesipolis perhaps felt unusual confidence as to what Apollo's uncle Poseidon must intend.⁴⁰ However that may be, he succeeded in defusing a most explosive omen by a religious interpretation that was apparently accepted by pious contemporaries.

If, therefore, a plan or expedition was abandoned because of the lesser obstacle of discouraging sacrifices, the king must either have been unusually

timorous, or have felt genuine doubt whether the proposed action was wise. In 396 Agesilaus abandoned a plan to march further inland because the 'offering was lobeless', and returned to the sea; he realised, Xenophon adds without a hint of irony, that he could not campaign successfully in the plain without cavalry support.⁴¹ It is striking that during the Peloponnesian War not one of the many invasions of Attica was prevented by crossing-sacrifices – one yielded to an earth-tremor – while three of the much less frequent expeditions against the Argolid turned back at the borders.⁴² Were there factors that made aggression against the Dorian neighbour Argos more controversial than against Attica?

Divination was doubtless under control in Sparta, as it normally is wherever it is practised. Pious Spartans manipulated it without realising that this was what they were doing. (The important correlate is that no Spartan explicitly rejected its validity.) Perhaps we should see the relation of, say, Agesilaus to his seers as much like that of a modern politician to his economic advisers. Politicians believe profoundly in economic predictions; politicians are sometimes swayed by economic advice; politicians find ways of carrying through certain favoured policies whatever economic advisers may say. It is not a matter of simple bad faith but of the complexity of the factors that shape any human decision.

The charm of divination for the consultant is that he need never feel that he is acting at random. Spartans liked clear directives; and many of their distinctive religious attitudes reflect the disposition to conduct life according to fixed rules. It is well known how determined they were to hold the traditional festivals at the traditional times, even at the risk of military disadvantage;⁴³ and they showed notable respect for the festivals of other states.⁴⁴ The rules of sanctuary too were taken seriously by the Spartans, and the threatened or exiled king living holed up in a sacred precinct is one of the recurrent figures in Spartan history.⁴⁵ A state which before going to war declares ceremonially that its cause is just is insisting on its adherence to certain rules: the practice is familiar from Rome rather than from Greece, but we find King Archidamus in 429 formally calling the 'gods and heroes who occupy the land of Plataea' as witnesses to the justice of the Spartan invasion, and Brasidas using similar language to the Acanthians in 424. Respect for rules can lead to a narrow legalism. Each year the ephors declared war on the helots 'so that killing them might not cause pollution'.⁴⁶

But Spartan religion was not a system designed to justify the conduct of Spartiates in every situation. When they broke their own rules they acknowledged their guilt, and as a state they appear in our sources as almost uniquely willing to ascribe national misfortunes to collective religious guilt. The great earthquake occurred because helots exercising their right of sanctuary in Poseidon's shrine at Taenarum had been lured out with promises and treacherously killed.⁴⁷ (The memory of this never-forgotten national catastrophe must have kept the sense of religious danger alive, and largely

explains the Spartans' subsequent unease about earthquakes.) The Spartans fared so unexpectedly ill in the Archidamian war because they had entered on it illegally, in violation of oaths, or perhaps because King Pleistoanax had secured his recall by corrupting the Pythia. Agamemnon's herald Talthybius was enraged at the impious murder of the heralds of Darius, and to appease him two Spartiates were sent up to Susa for punishment, it was said. Ceremonial redress had also to be made for the killing of the regent Pausanias, in partial violation of sanctuary. Perhaps the most awe-inspiring cautionary tale in Herodotus is that of Glaucus, son of Epicydes, whose family was obliterated root and branch because he enquired tentatively of Apollo whether he might retain a deposit by fraud. The hapless Glaucus was a Spartiate, and it must have been in Sparta that the story had its origin.⁴⁸

The Spartans heeded divine signs and obeyed the rules. Even a rogue Spartan such as Lysander, whose disposition to 'treat the gods as enemies' is stigmatised by Plutarch as quite un-Laconian, understood and exploited this tendency of his compatriots.⁴⁹ Harsh terms, superstition and religiosity, have accordingly often been applied to their religious outlook. It may be captious to object that superstition had not been invented at the date of most of the events here discussed. *Deisidaimonia* did not acquire its familiar sense until the second half of the fourth century, when traditional religious concepts were being in some measure rethought in response to philosophical criticism. It seems that no single term had existed before this to stigmatise a religious attitude that erred by excess.⁵⁰ The real objection is that the so-called Spartan superstitiousness is not a matter of isolated quirks unrelated to the central tenets of Greek religion. The power of prophecy, the sanctity of sanctuaries and festivals, the threat of divine punishment: it is on issues such as these that the distinctiveness of the Spartan attitude emerges. And their eccentricity is merely to believe with unusual seriousness what other Greeks believed too.

It is more helpful to relate Spartan religion to the society that produced it, and in particular to the singular Spartan discipline. Mary Douglas has argued in *Natural symbols*⁵¹ that the forms of social discipline in a society and its conceptions of divine power are related phenomena. The more an individual feels subject as a social being to a set of rules that he must obey without question, the more he is bound within a hierarchical structure of power, the more likely he is to understand religion too as a matter of fixed and formal observance, of strict obedience to rules. Where the conditions of life are, so to speak, more open to negotiation and where persuasion and explanation are valued, there the gods too become less legalistic, and intentions come to count for more than acts. Any classical scholar who reads *Natural symbols* must be put in mind of the contrast often made in Thucydides between Spartan and Athenian society.⁵² This is particularly so since Douglas makes a connection between forms of social discipline and linguistic practices: a tightly controlled society is reflected in the 'restricted code', full of orders not backed by explanations, while more open social forms have their equivalent in the more

discursive and explanatory ‘elaborated code’. Pericles in Thucydides praises the Athenians’ belief in the power of rational discussion:⁵³ the English word ‘laconism’ bears witness that the Spartans invented the ‘restricted code’.

The gods were at the top of the chain of command that ran down through Spartan society.⁵⁴ Their traditional rules, about festivals and sanctuary and the like, were there to be obeyed without question; and amid life’s contingencies it was constantly necessary to seek further specific instructions through divination supervised by the humans just below them in the chain of command. Fear of the gods, *deisidaimonia*, was a particular form of that ‘fear’ which in Greek thought was the foundation of social discipline.⁵⁵ Spartan religion was Spartan more in its insistence on orderliness and obedience than in any particular military emphasis it may have had. For the gods of disorder, imagination and individualism it had little place. Thus it contributed to the ‘success of Sparta’ by supporting the dominant norms of Spartan society. Its ethos is perhaps caught best in a happy comment by Xenophon, after he has described the military and athletic competitions with which Agesilaus trained his army at Ephesus:

Anyone would have been heartened who saw first Agesilaus and then the rest of the troops going away garlanded from the exercise-grounds and then dedicating their garlands to Artemis. When men were honouring the gods, training for war, and learning to be obedient, was not everything there bound to inspire cheerful hopes?⁵⁶

† Reprinted from *Classical Sparta: Techniques behind her Success*, ed. by Anton Powell, London: Routledge, 1989; by permission of the author, editor and publisher.

¹ See Hdt. 1.65–6, Aristotle fr. 534 Rose *ap.* Plut. *Lyc.* 30.4, [S. Wide, *Lakonische Kulte* (Leipzig, 1893)], 281–3.

² Hdt. 6.58.2, 59; Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.1; Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 15.9 (this last text does not necessarily mean, as is often assumed, that the kings received continuing heroic cult *post mortem*: cf. *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 13.1, Jan. 1988, 9–10; answered *ibid.* 13.3, March 1988).

³ 7.204, 8.131.2. In a poem apparently written for a Spartan symposium, Ion of Chios (fr. 27 West *ap.* Ath. 463a) calls for libations to be poured to the kings’ heroic ancestors ‘starting from Zeus’, and probably speaks of one of the kings with striking fulsomeness as ‘our saviour and father’: cf. M.L. West, *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 32 (1985), 74 (though West believes the ‘saviour and father’ to be Dionysus). This is why sterility and illegitimacy were so feared: see especially Hdt. 5.39.2, [P. Carlier, *La royauté en Grèce avant Alexandre* (Strasbourg, 1984)], 296.

⁴ Thuc. 5.16.2 (Pleistoanax); Xen. *Cyr.* 4.1.24, 7.2.24, cf. *Lac. Pol.* 15.2; Hdt. 6.56 (priesthoods); [Hdt. 5.75, 6.52; cf. the works cited by W. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, Oxford, 1985, nn. 6 and 7, and Carlier, *La royauté*, 298–301] (Dioscuri). Cf. P. Cartledge, *Agesilaos* (London, 1987), 100–10, who endorses Max Weber’s designation of the Spartan kingship as ‘family-charismatic’.

⁵ See Thuc. 5.16.1–2 (Pleistoanax: note the Pythia’s threat); Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.1–4, Plut. *Ages.* 30.1 (Agesilaus); Hdt. 7.220.4 (Leonidas); Plut. *Cleom.* 19.9, 21 (inhibitions): see the excellent discussion by Carlier, *La royauté*, 292–301; and, on the prestige of the kingship, G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, *The origins of the Peloponnesian war* (London, 1972), 139. Similar attitudes to leaders are found in myth, and persisted in diluted form in other parts of historical Greece: cf. R. Parker, *Miasma* (Oxford, 1983), 265–9.

⁶ Thuc. 5.16.2.

⁷ Hdt. 6.58, cf. Tyrtaeus fr. 7 West, Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.1, *Lac. Pol.* 15.9; Cartledge, *Agesilaos*, 331–43 (who cites modern sociological studies of the symbolic significance of royal funerals).

⁸ Demaratus: Hdt. 6.63.3; curse: Hdt. 6.56 (details are problematic – cf. most recently Carlier, *La royauté*, 257–60 – but there is no reason to doubt that the king’s authority on campaign was supported by

a curse); Plut. [*Spartan Sayings*] 239e (helots). On public curses in general see the references in Parker, *Miasma*, 193–4.

⁹ Hdt. 7.133–4; Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.4. I owe this point to S. Hodkinson, ‘Social order and the conflict of values in classical Sparta’, *Chiron* 13 (1983) 239–81, esp. 273–6, where the role of divination in Spartan life is well emphasised.

¹⁰ Tyrtæus fr. 4 West; Strabo 10.4.19 (482) = Ephorus *FGrH* 70 fr. 149 (cf. Horn. *Od.* 19.179); Hdt. 6.52.

¹¹ Hdt. 6.66.1; Thuc. 5.16.2; Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.2–4; Hdt. 5.63. The plots of Lysander are also very revealing: Ephorus *FGrH* 70 frs. 206–7, with Jacoby.

¹² See further ‘Greek states and Greek oracles’, in *Crux, Essays presented to G.E.M. de Ste. Croix*, ed. P. Cartledge and F.D. Harvey (London, 1985 = *History of political thought*, 6), 298–326, esp. 306–9, 318–19. Add Hdt. 5.90.2 (influence of oracles brought from Athens by Cleomenes); Thuc. 1.103.2 (influence of an old Pythian response); [Stephanus Byzantinus] s.v. *Anthana* (oracles written by Cleomenes). Paus. 3.18.3 comments too on the Spartans’ special interest in Ammon.

¹³ *Pythioi*: Hdt. 6.57.2–4; Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 15.5. On the right of consultation (for the point at issue cf. Xen. *Anab.* 5.6.27) see Ph.E. Legrand, *Quo animo Graeci divinationem adhibuerint* (Paris, 1898), 72–3; Carlier, *La royauté*, 268. Two military questions are assigned to kings (Hdt. 6.76.1, Xen. *Hell.* 4.7.2), perhaps loosely; otherwise ‘the Spartans’ consult.

¹⁴ Star-watching: Plut. *Cleom.* 11.3–6, cf. *Crux*, 319–20 with n. 75; Carlier, *La royauté*, 293–6 (sceptical of its importance). Athens: Strabo 9.2.11 (404), cf. L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* (Berlin, 1932), 203.

¹⁵ Pasiphae: Plut. *Cleom.* 28.3, cf. 9.1–4; [Cicero, *de Divinatione*] 1.96; *IG* 5.1.1317, on which see D.W. Prakken in *Studies presented to D.M. Robinson*, 2. (St. Louis, Missouri, 1953), 340–8; cf. Jacoby on *FGrH* 596 (*Anonymoi*) fr. 46. Amphiaræus: *IG* 7.4252 (cf. 4253–4). For a consultation on an important issue, but still a religious one relating to the god himself, see Hyperides, [*pro Euxenippo*] 14–17.

¹⁶ Cf. H. Popp, *Die Einwirkung von Vorzeichen, Opfern und Festen auf die Kriegführung der Griechen* (Erlangen, 1957); [W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War* (Berkeley, 1971–85), I] 109–15; 3, 47–153, esp. 67–71; R. Lonis, *Guerre et religion en Grèce à l’époque classique* (Paris, 1979), 43–67, 95–115; A.J. Holladay, *CQ* 36 (1986), 152–60.

¹⁷ Paus. 9.13.4; Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 13.3 (cf. 15.5).

¹⁸ Hdt. 9.33–5.

¹⁹ Hdt. 6.76; Thuc. 5.54.1, 55.3, 116.1.

²⁰ Thuc. 3.89.1, 6.95.1; Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.24; Thuc. 8.6.5. Similarly in 480 an eclipse encouraged Cleombrotus to lead the Spartan army home from the Isthmus (Hdt. 9.10.3).

²¹ Cf. Lonis, *Guerre et religion*, 97.

²² Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.15; *Hell. Oxy.* 7.4; Xen. *Hell.* 4.7.7. Thunderbolts too deterred Agesipolis’ force; but, significantly, his main work was done (cf. Popp, *Die Einwirkung*, 58).

²³ Hdt. 9.36 (cf. Popp, *Die Einwirkung*, 49); Xen. *Hell.* 3.1.17–19.

²⁴ Hdt. 9.61–2. Cf. Xen. *Hell.* 4.6.10 (Agesilaus).

²⁵ Hdt. 6.81–2; cf. de Ste. Croix, *The origins of the Peloponnesian war*, 351.

²⁶ Xen., *Lac. Pol.* 13.2–5.

²⁷ Pritchett, *Greek state at war*, 3, 139, appears to go beyond the evidence in saying that the king was ‘compelled by law to act in accordance with the sacrifice’.

²⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.36, Anaxibius, 389. A consequence of casualness, not irreligion, according to Xenophon.

²⁹ Cf. Pritchett, *Greek state at war*, 3, 67–8.

³⁰ Popp and Pritchett (above n. 16) assemble and criticise many such rationalisations.

³¹ Xen. *Hell.* 4.2.18, *Anab.* 6.4.14.

³² *Hipparchicus*, 9.8–9.

³³ Thuc. 5.54–5.

³⁴ See the works cited above, n. 16.

³⁵ Pritchett has shown that in education, background and interests seers often differed little from commanders, and might even control rather than increase their religious scruples (*Greek state at war*, 3, 47–72., 110–11; note especially Plut. [*Nicias*] 23.7 on Stilbides, *Dion* 22.6 on Miltas). Even Tisamenus was an outsider only in nationality; as an Olympic competitor (Hdt. 9.33.2) he was very much ‘one of us’.

³⁶ Xen. *Anab.* 2.2.3 (cf. Popp, *Die Einwirkung*, 61) is instructive; cf. too e.g. Hdt. 8.60, last sentence, Philochorus *FGrH* 328 fr. 135.

³⁷ Rules governing repetition are not recorded, for any form of military divination. Pritchett notes (*Greek state at war*, 3, 77) that Xenophon twice abandoned for the day a proposed march after three failures to secure omens (*Anab.* 6.4.16, 19). Before battle, sacrifices could presumably be repeated *ad infinitum*.

- ³⁸ Hdt. 6.76.
- ³⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 4.7.2–4. The diplomatic questioning in 2 – cf. Arist. *Rhet.* 2.1398b 33–5 – shows a similarly opportunist but not necessarily irreligious attitude.
- ⁴⁰ So G. Grote, *A history of Greece* (edition in 12 volumes, London, 1883), vol. 9, 183. Similar circumstances: above, n. 20.
- ⁴¹ *Hell.* 3.4.15.
- ⁴² See pp. 165–6 above. Was Agis soft on Argos (cf. Thuc. 5.60)?
- ⁴³ For a balanced recent survey see A.J. Holladay, *CQ* 36 (1986), 157–60, who notes that the principle was not absolute and remarks ‘her piety, though remarkable, was not total and suicidal’.
- ⁴⁴ For references see Parker, *Miasma*, 155–6.
- ⁴⁵ Thuc. 5.16.3, Plut. *Lys.* 30.1, Plut. *Cleom.* 16.6, 18–19. For Spartan respect for supplication cf. further e.g. Thuc. 1.103.2, Xen. *Hell.* 4.3.20 (contrast Hdt. 6.79). Of course violations also occurred (see below).
- ⁴⁶ Thuc. 2.74.2, 4.87.2; Aristotle fr. 538 Rose *ap.* Plut. *Lyc.* 28.7.
- ⁴⁷ Thuc. 1.128.1; cf. P. Cartledge, ‘Seismicity and Spartan Society’, *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 1 (1976), 25–8, who points out that Laconia suffered far more from earthquakes than Attica did.
- ⁴⁸ Thuc. 7.18.2; 5.16.1; Hdt. 7.133–7; Thuc. 1.134.4; Hdt. 6.86. Religious explanations were also available for the Spartans’ 4th c. reverses at Theban hands (Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.1, 6.4.7), but we do not know how seriously they were taken in Sparta.
- ⁴⁹ Plut. *Lys.* 8.4; for other instances of alleged religious scheming cf. 20.6–8, 25–6.
- ⁵⁰ See [M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* I (3rd ed., Munich, 1967), 1, 796, and the works he cites. Xenophon still applies *deisidaimon* to Agesilaus (*Ages.* 11.8) in its old favourable sense of ‘god-fearing’. The extent to which the revaluation of the term (in the Peripatos? – cf. e.g. Theophrastus *ap.* [Porphyry, *On Abstinence*] 2.7. p.138.10–139.19 Nauck with Plut. *De Superst.* 164e–65c) signalled a real alteration in religious values needs to be clarified. It had always been possible in other ways to criticise supposedly religious behaviour as misguided (see e.g. Horn. *Od.* 2.178–86, Thuc. 7.50.4, Hippoc. *de Morbo Sacro* p.144.16–20 Jones, 28 Grensemann).
- ⁵¹ Revised edition, London, 1973. But the supposed distinction between ‘restricted’ and ‘elaborated’ codes, derived from Basil Bernstein, has been much criticised: see e.g. M. Coulthard, ‘A discussion of restricted and elaborated codes’, *Educational review* 22.1 (1969), 38–50; M. Stubbs, *Educational linguistics* (Oxford, 1986), 235–6.
- ⁵² Most obviously in the speech of the Corinthians, 1.68–71, and by implication in Pericles’ Funeral Oration. On the contrasting character of political debate see e.g. P.A. Cartledge, *JHS* 98 (1978), 34–7.
- ⁵³ 2.40.2.
- ⁵⁴ Cf. Thuc. 5.66.2–4: on campaign almost every Spartan is a ‘commander of a commander’.
- ⁵⁵ [Aeschylus, *Eumenides*] 517–19, 696–9; cf. C.W. Macleod, *JHS* 102 (1982), 135–6 = *Collected essays* (Oxford, 1983), 31–2. ‘The Spartans have a shrine of Fear ... they honour fear not like the powers they seek to avert, considering it harmful, but thinking that the constitution is chiefly held together by fear’: Plut. *Cleom.* 30. Cf. Hodkinson, above n. 9, rather than P. Epps, ‘Fear in Spartan Character’, *CPhil* 28 (1933), 12–29.
- ⁵⁶ *Hell.* 3.4.18. I have delivered a part of this paper to a seminar organised by Oswyn Murray in Oxford, as well as to the London Classical Society. I am grateful to the participants on both occasions for helpful observations, to Paul Cartledge for expert written comments, and to Anton Powell for the invitation to study this subject.

PART IV

Perioeci and Helots

Introduction

The three chapters in this part examine subordinate elements at Sparta, the people who comprised the majority of the population of the territory and permitted the citizen elite to enjoy its particular life-style. First the evidence for the organisation and function of the *perioeci*, the people who 'lived round about', is surveyed by Graham Shipley. The *perioeci* rarely receive adequate attention in studies of Sparta, primarily because the ancient evidence is extremely limited.¹ In the past scholarly attention focused on the insoluble question of ethnic origin, whether *perioeci* were Dorian like their Spartiate over-lords or Achaean, or other pre-Dorian element, as the helots are assumed to be.² A much more fruitful approach is to identify the geographical distribution of the 100, or so, perioecic communities attested in ancient sources,³ since the existence of particular local resources may give insight into the range of activities undertaken by this overlooked element in Laconian society.

Shipley has done most in recent years to improve our knowledge in this respect, and even if the extract in [Chapter 9](#) offers an early statement of his views,⁴ it clearly brings out the importance of the *perioeci* and their multifarious contribution to the Spartan state. Their position was complex: they were politically subject to Sparta, to the extent that they could be summarily executed on the Ephors' orders (Isocrates 12.181), and they seem to have had no influence over the campaigns on which they were obliged to follow the Spartiate lead, but ancient writers often apply *polis* terminology to their communities, in which the Spartiates probably did not have the inclination or resources to interfere too closely. Their role in Spartan production and exchange is taken for granted, but the majority of *perioeci* will have been farmers, of whom some will have been substantial land owners who lived off the labour of slaves or other dependents;⁵ thousands of *perioeci* had the resources to equip themselves to serve in the Spartan army, and Xenophon comments that there were many *kaloi kagathoi*, good sound chaps, among them (*Hell.* 5.3.9).⁶ In Laconia the divinities prominent in perioecic religious shrines are those which dominate Spartan religion: Artemis, the Dioscuri, Poseidon and Apollo.⁷ Even more interestingly, it is now beginning to emerge that perioecic communities in Messenia worshipped the same range of divinities, and that the dedications discovered at their shrines are very similar to those found in Laconia.⁸

Helots, not surprisingly, have received much more attention both in

antiquity and from modern scholars, but the evidence is patchy and there are important areas of disagreement, especially about the impact which this very large servile group had on the Spartan system. The current orthodoxy, certainly in Anglophone scholarship, is that the helots provide the explanation for the whole Spartan system, since not only did their labour underpin the privileged military life of full citizens but their persistent rebelliousness determined the development and operation of the Spartan system, both within Laconia through the need to supervise and repress the servile population, and in the wider world because Sparta was afraid to divert scarce resources to external ventures.⁹ Sparta's foreign relations will be examined in Part 5, whereas Chapters 10 and 11 focus on internal issues. To represent the majority view, I have chosen de Ste Croix's analysis of the helots from the start of his chapter on 'Spartan Foreign Policy, and the Peloponnesian League',¹⁰ since this clearly presents the ancient evidence in favour of this thesis. The issue to be confronted will, by now, be familiar - the extent to which it is safe to generalise on the basis of specific passages in ancient sources, even if we have the very highest respect for the authors. Thucydides famously observed that 'most matters for the Spartans with regard to the helots were always for the most part established with a view to security' (4.80.3), immediately before recounting the notorious episode in which Sparta enticed 2,000 ambitious helots to a secret death, and Thucydides' judgement appears to be corroborated by Aristotle's statement about helots lying in wait for Spartan misfortunes (*Pol.* 2.6, 1269a37-8), by Xenophon's narrative of the conspiracy of Cinadon (*circa* 399: *Hell.* 3.3), and by Plutarch's description, based on Aristotle's lost *Lacedaimonion Politeia*, of the institution of the *krypteia* and the Ephors' annual declaration of war on the helots (*Lyc.* 28).

Problems, however, surround all this material. For example, the *krypteia*, which is often assumed to be an annual *rite de passage* for a new cohort of young Spartiates, who supposedly had to go off into the country to kill their helot before reaching manhood,¹¹ appears to have been an intermittent rather than an annual event and did not involve all young Spartiates; we cannot even be certain that this was an ancient ritual which survived into the Classical period, since it could have been introduced in the fifth century as an additional means of keeping control.¹² Thucydides' generalisation may have been extrapolated from a particular crisis, which the Spartans in fact survived rather successfully, while the Cinadon episode is not a straightforward narrative but a story told by an informer in order to impress Spartan authorities and recounted by Xenophon for a literary purpose.¹³ As a result, the extent to which a class struggle was the dominant issue at Sparta has been questioned, so that de Ste Croix's clear presentation, far from being the basis for speculation about Sparta in action, should be the topic for continued debate.¹⁴

One aspect of this debate should concern the conditions of existence for helots in Laconia and Messenia. Whereas de Ste Croix speaks of ruthless domination,¹⁵ a less extreme image can be teased from the ancient evidence.

The problem with this alternative approach is that, at least from the fifth century BC, observers of Sparta have sought to construct positive images of an idealised state, and part of this process may have been to massage unpleasant aspects of the historical Sparta, including perhaps the treatment of the helots. Nevertheless, the argument needs to be pursued. Ducat has conducted an exhaustive review of ancient sources on the helots, and the chapter in which he presents the evidence on what helots actually did and where they lived is included here, since it has the virtue of recognising the need both to assess each phrase, or even word, minutely and to remember the scope for distortion as the images of Sparta developed over time. What emerges, however tentatively, is that helots may have enjoyed somewhat more favourable conditions than most chattel slaves in other parts of the Greek world, since they could have a family life and retain control over a certain proportion of the product of their individual labour:¹⁶ in the famous definition of Pollux, the helots of Sparta were ‘between slaves and free men’.¹⁷ The lure of freedom may have attracted the helotised Messenians much more than helots in Laconia, since the former retained the memory of their previous liberty and could find external supporters to uphold their claims to independence.¹⁸

Another factor in the rebelliousness of the Messenians may have been that the living conditions which they had to endure were rather different from those pertaining in Laconia. The Pylos Regional Archaeology Project (PRAP), whose fieldwork was completed in the summer of 1996, confirmed the findings of the 1970s University of Minnesota Messenia Expedition, which had recorded relatively few rural sites in the region: because of the striking contrast with conditions in other parts of Greece, where settlement was dispersed across the countryside in small sites, the Minnesota findings had been regarded as the product of defective survey methodology. Such doubts are unfounded, and Messenia appears to be bare, with only four areas of denser settlement in the Pamisos valley, the Stenyclarus plain, the south-east peninsula near Koroni, and the vicinity of Pylos.¹⁹ It would appear that, during the period of Spartan control, Messenians lived in fairly large towns or villages, whereas a more standard form of population distribution emerged in the later fourth century, after liberation. Investigation of one rural site, at the village of Kopaniki in the Soulima valley, reveals a very large structure, too big for an ordinary farmhouse but perhaps to be identified as the centre for the exploitation of a large estate.²⁰ It seems that the Spartans arranged the distribution of population in Messenia with a view to ease of control. But, even though conditions in Messenia were unusual, it is not safe to connect all stories of Spartan problems with helots, or of Spartan brutality towards helots, with these Messenians:²¹ this would fall into the trap of allowing Sparta to be whitewashed. As Ducat makes clear, the helots perplexed ancient commentators and we should not pretend that there is a definitive solution to all questions of their status, involvement and impact at Sparta.²²

¹ This is usefully collected in Shipley, ‘Lakedaimonians’, 214–23.

² The fairly sterile debate is clearly summarised in Oliva, *Sparta*, 55–62; the best conclusion is that they represent a mixture of peoples.

³ Androtion, *FGH* 324F49, records the total of about 100, while Cartledge, *Sparta*, 185, notes that about eighty names are attested. Cartledge, *Sparta*, 187–93, provides a thorough geographical survey organised around major routes through Laconia; Shipley, 'PERIOIKOS', 214–21 (the section of the article immediately before that reprinted in this chapter), updates the survey, and there is a comprehensive catalogue of sites in Shipley, 'Lakedaimonians', 223–81. The evidence for those perioecic communities which can be categorised as *poleis* will be presented in another publication of the Copenhagen Polis Centre, *Inventory of Archaic and Classical Greek Poleis*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

⁴ Graham Shipley has commented to me that he would now wish to draw a sharper distinction between evidence for the Archaic/Classical periods and for the Hellenistic. But this does not affect the validity of his general observations.

⁵ The possibility that *perioeci* might have controlled Helots is usually dismissed out of hand (e.g. Oliva, *Sparta*, 57; Cartledge, *Sparta*, 185, states that their land would not have been good enough), but there must have been considerable variations in wealth among the *perioeci* and it is likely that some prospered through the exploitation of some form of servile labour, not only on the fields but also, perhaps, in the quarries which they probably oversaw.

⁶ Such *perioeci* presumably also had the spare time to train extensively, especially after they were brigaded alongside full Spartiates (contrast Lazenby, *Army*, Ch. 3).

⁷ Parker, 'Religion', 145.

⁸ I owe this information to Nino Luraghi, to whom I am very grateful for an advance copy of his paper, 'Imagined Messenians: Constructing a Group Identity in the Ancient Peloponnese'.

⁹ For example: G. Grundy, *Thucydides and the History of his Age*, vol. I (2nd edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949); M. I. Finley, 'Was Greek Civilization Based on Slave Labour?', *Historia* 8, 1959, 145–64, at 158–9 (reprinted in Finley, *Economy*, 97–115, at 109); Finley, 'Sparta', 109; Cartledge, *Sparta*, 177.

¹⁰ de Ste Croix, *Origins*, Ch. IV, 89–166.

¹¹ For an influential statement of this orthodoxy, see Finley, 'Sparta', 28, which was based on Jeanmaire, 'La cryptie'; cf. also Vidal-Naquet, 'Black Hunter'.

¹² Oliva, *Sparta*, 47 n. 3; H. Michell, *Sparta* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 162; Whitby, 'Images', 105–6.

¹³ The historicity of both the massacre of the 2,000 and the Cinadon conspiracy has been questioned: Talbert, 'Role'; J. F. Lazenby, 'The Conspiracy of Kinadon Reconsidered', *Athenaeum* 85, 1997, 437–47; sceptical discussion in Whitby, 'Images', 97–103.

¹⁴ Talbert's rejection of the validity of the class-struggle model provoked a swift rejoinder from Paul Cartledge, 'Revision'. For another analysis at the critical end of the spectrum, see Whitby, 'Images'.

¹⁵ *Origins*, 91: of *perioeci* as well as helots. In both cases further consideration is needed.

¹⁶ See also S. Hodkinson, 'Sharecropping': this independently makes many of the same points as Ducat, though Hodkinson argues, plausibly to my mind, that Tyrtaeus fr. 5 does describe the Messenians in a helotised state, even though the specific term is not itself used.

¹⁷ Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 3.83; other groups in this category named by Pollux are the Penestae of Thessaly, the Clarotae and Mnoetae of Crete, the Doruphoroi of the Mariandrians, the Gymnetes of Argos, and the Corynephoroi of Syracuse. Unfortunately, far less is known about these six other groups of 'quasi-slaves' than about helots, so they do not advance our understanding of conditions at Sparta.

¹⁸ See, for example, A. Roobaert, 'Le danger hilote?', *Ktema* 2, 1977, 141–55. The significance of Messenian exiles, especially those installed by the Athenians at Naupactus, in developing notions of national identity, is rightly argued by T. Figueira, 'The Evolution of Messenian National Identity', in Hodkinson and Powell, *Sparta*, 211–44.

¹⁹ Harrison and Spencer, 'Palace'.

²⁰ Thus Harrison and Spencer, 'Palace', 160–2.

²¹ Ducat is prone to this: see 'Le mépris des Hilotes', *Annales* 30, 1974, 1451–64, as well as *Hilotes*, Part II.

²² On the role of helots within the Spartan household, see also Hodkinson, 'Dependents', 46–55.

9 *Perioecic Society*[†]

GRAHAM SHIPLEY

Many or most of the perioikic communities, as the preceding survey has made clear, were in a position, like their modern-day successors, to exist more or less self-sufficiently. Though they varied in their combinations of resources, they will probably – with the possible exception of Gytheion – have been essentially peasant communities, maximizing olive and cereal production where possible, but constrained by the need to diversify in order to minimize the hazards posed by variable harvests. Most of them probably enjoyed a typical Greek mix of arable and pastoral farming, with additional resources in certain places, such as fishing, quarrying, and the production of different fruits and nuts. This is not to suggest, of course, that their economies were simply determined by the geography, without any influence from socio-cultural structures or Spartan power. Rather, it is to establish that the landscape limited the range of possible activities, and presented certain basic economic options which we can assume were attractive to a Greek society, other things being equal.

How does this judgement square with other modern characterizations of the Perioikoi? As stated earlier, Paul Cartledge some years ago emphasized that they were not exclusively traders or craftsmen; but this does not yet seem to have become the standard view, at least to the extent that discussion of the Perioikoi tends not to find its way into new general textbooks. There is also the problem of the ‘standard bibliography’. Among English writers of books on Sparta since the war (other than Cartledge), Forrest seems to be alone in stressing that many perioikic communities were remote, and in considering their social position and the extent of their farmland.¹ Most other post-war books on Sparta are now outdated in their view of the Perioikoi; but these are the books that students and non-specialists consult most often, simply because they are most readily available in bookshops and libraries. While not always stating that all Perioikoi lived by trading and manufacturing, these books do tend to leave the reader with that impression, if only because they do not state the contrary.² It is necessary to keep restating Cartledge’s insights, and building on them (as I hope to do here), in order to create a new climate of opinion in which it is taken for granted that the Perioikoi matter.

In this section I shall examine how the evidence of perioikic society and settlement – history from the perioikic point of view, as it were – raises important questions for Lakonian history in general. I have already mentioned distance from Sparta as a possible factor limiting the degree of active intervention and control Sparta could exert. Distance from a centre may also

contribute positively to the creation of a local culture. Other things being equal, we should not expect exactly the same customs and social structure in Boiai as in Pellana or Gytheion. Obviously, however, it will be hard to fill out a detailed picture of local cultures in the absence of written or artistic evidence (though local cults might have something to tell us).

Local culture is partly a matter of political organization. In ancient sources the perioikic communities are often referred to as poleis, 'citizen-states'.³ While some recent writers have noted that the reality may have been otherwise, they have not explored the question in depth. What kinds of political communities were the perioikic settlements? If they were not truly autonomous, as poleis should be, may they nevertheless have represented themselves to themselves as such? And why, if they were not what one could justifiably call poleis, were they referred to as such by Classical and other authors, including the usually precise Thucydides?

It is quite clear that none of the sites examined above, with the possible exception of Gytheion, comes close to what we would call a city. Even the number of those that could reasonably be called towns is small. This does not mean, however, that Herodotos and other authors were wrong to call them poleis. The idea of the polis as an autonomous religious-political community existing for the benefit of its members is chiefly due to Aristotle, who was generalizing about Classical Greece from a later standpoint. The use of the term in practice need not have corresponded to his model, and might have been applied to communities of intermediate status. If Cartledge is correct to suggest that political relations between Sparta and perioikic communities were governed by unequal treaties committing the Perioikoi to 'follow the Spartans wherever they led', then it may even be that diplomatic procedure required the Spartans to deal with their 'allies' as if they were independent states. The title of polis embodies a political claim; that is why Pausanias, writing much later about the rudimentary settlement of Panopeus in Phokis, persists in calling it a polis even though he has just inveighed against the presumption of its inhabitants in laying claim to that title.⁴ If they wanted to call themselves a polis, then (from more than one point of view) that is what they were.

In the usual model, a polis has a territory (*chora*). We know too little of the organization of the perioikic landscape to say whether the towns had territories they could call their own. Perhaps the very fact that certain plots were designated as royal land implies that the Spartans recognized perioikic ownership of other areas. On the other hand, the ancient sources rarely use a proper-name for the area around a perioikic town, as they might have done if the town had had a *chora*. The exceptions all seem to be in the north (e.g. Belminatis, Thyreatis, Aigytis, Skiritis – possibly without a central settlement in the last example); possibly the frontier status of this region brought special factors into play.

Territories are uncertain; but it may be possible to speak of central settlements. It appears that most of the plains in Lakonia contain one or more

relatively large and elaborate settlements, which we may justly call central places. Overall, the sites seem to form a hierarchy of statuses, ranging from small 'tertiary' places, typically without much arable (e.g. Glympeis, Marios, Zarax, or Agrianoi), through 'secondary' or satellite centres, either in the vicinity of major towns (as Teuthrone and Kotyrta are in the vicinity of Gytheion) or dominating a distinct area of arable (e.g. Chrysapha, Palaia, or Iasos), to major centres. In the last category I would put only the following towns: Prasiai, Pellana, Geronthrai, Gytheion, Kyparissia, Epidauros Limera, and possibly Boiai. As indicated in Section 2 [of Shipley, '*PERIOIKOS*', 214–21], there need not have been royal *temene* ['domains'] in all these places, nor need Sparta's interest in every area have been the same. In some cases, perhaps, the *Spartiatike ge* (['Spartiate land']) probably synonymous with that farmed by Helots) may have encroached upon the perioikic farmland.

THE PERIOIKOI AND SPARTA

Economic autarky, local cultures, and even something like polis institutions may have existed; but I am not going so far as to argue that Spartan rule was not oppressive. If Osborne is right to see correspondences between the Classical settlement patterns of different parts of southern Greece and their political systems, then in Lakonia too we should expect to see Spartan power reflected in the settlement pattern. Osborne suggests that Sparta, unlike Athens and other states, depended on a strict demarcation between central settlement and peripheral territory. In Attica the demes were constituent parts of the polis, and power was devolved from the centre (or, one might just as well say, claimed by the demes). In Lakonia it was necessary 'to divorce the town as a political centre from the town of commerce and manufacture'⁵ – and, one might add, from the town as the embodiment of the social organization of agricultural production. This explains, among other things, the difference between the use of ethnic names in Attica and in Lakonia: an Athenian citizen could be equally well called Attikos or Athenaios, but not every Lakedaimonios was a Spartiate.

A polarized landscape is certainly revealed in the evidence for settlements. Apart from (possibly) Gytheion and certain sanctuary sites such as the Hyperteateon, there are no centres of population that compare with Attic demes such as Eleusis, Thorikos, or Acharnai, and no monumental sanctuaries to compare with Sounion or Brauron. Everything is as if the Spartans successfully restrained the development of perioikic settlements and sanctuaries, so that they never reached the stage where they might erect monumental civic buildings or temples. Equally, though the evidence is of course incomplete, settlement seems markedly dispersed. It is illuminating to compare what happened after Spartan power began to wane. It is then that we see the first clear signs of urban development (public documents inscribed on stone, theatres, council-houses, and so on) in a number of towns, as well as the

first signs of federal-style unions (Pellana as one of a tripolis; the synoecism of Boiai).⁶

By what practical means the perioikic economy was constricted we are unlikely ever to know in detail. Cartledge thinks it unlikely that tribute as such was levied upon the Perioikoi;⁷ it was unnecessary in any case, for Sparta could command much of their labour and economic surpluses by other means. Not only did many Perioikoi serve in the Spartan army (and presumably spend long days training for it), while some worked the royal *temene*, but everything suggests that it was from perioikic smiths that the Spartans got their weapons and armour.⁸ Even if they paid for them, they will scarcely have paid a lot; Perioikoi will not have got rich on the weapons trade. All the signs are that Sparta successfully prevented the accumulation of surpluses in perioikic hands, which might otherwise have been converted into visible wealth in the form of public buildings and monuments.

We need not imagine Sparta directly policing the Perioikoi, or intervening by force. (Thucydides implies that, during the late fifth century at least, Spartan troops were not normally deployed in scattered garrisons across perioikic territory, but concentrated in strength.)⁹ In that case we have to explain why the Perioikoi, with rare exceptions, remained loyal to Sparta. No doubt the sheer distances between towns made a concerted rebellion impracticable; Sparta could have picked them off one by one. Again, assuming the Perioikoi were not, culturally speaking, perfectly homogeneous, there may have been no great fellow-feeling (let alone class solidarity) between men from different places.

In addition, it seems necessary to suppose that Sparta, like ruling powers in any age, exploited class differences and other sectional interests among its subjects. Cartledge has remarked in passing on the existence of a wealthy group among Perioikoi in the early fourth century,¹⁰ and believes that those who served as hoplites in the Spartan army belonged to an elite (if a rather wide one). Whether this is true or not depends on one's view of hoplites in Classical citizen-states. Were they always drawn from a social elite within the citizen body? Or were all able-bodied citizens – who, simply by the fact that they were citizens, were a privileged, relatively prosperous elite within the Greek population – expected to serve? Whichever was the case, there are other reasons for supposing that Sparta played upon the loyalty of particular groups. Even if Perioikoi, at the time when they were brigaded separately from Spartans,¹¹ were under the direct command of Spartiatai, it is hard to imagine them being mobilized for campaign or training without some kind of local command structure. It is simplest to suppose that the responsibility for raising contingents lay with the upper-class landowners of each community.

To this extent the Perioikoi can be seen not so much as one of a large oppressed minority (or even majority) in Lakedaimon, but as collaborators with the Spartiate ruling class and sharers in the profits of the Spartan system. These profits perhaps lay, at least for the great majority, not in craft production

and commerce but in military service; for example, in the booty that might be distributed at the end of successful campaigns. To some degree the Perioikoi can even be seen as partly responsible for the oppression of their fellow Greeks, the Helots.¹²

Barring the unlikely discovery of large numbers of documents, we shall never know what Perioikoi thought of Spartans. From all that I have said, however, it follows that they need not all have had but one, thought. In some places, loyalty to Sparta may have run high; revolts are almost unheard of, and on one of the two important occasions when a revolt did take place it was not Lakonian but Messenian Perioikoi that rose up, and then only in concert with Messenian Helots.¹³ The other was in c.399 BC, when a certain Kinadon, probably one of the Hypomeiones (a class of Spartiatas demoted from full citizen status) tried to mobilize the Perioikoi alongside the Hypomeiones and other disadvantaged groups (Neodamodeis and Helots) in a general revolt against the ruling elite.¹⁴ The rising was nipped in the bud, but Xenophon alleges that Kinadon expected perioikic support, since (like the other groups) they hated the Spartans so badly that they would gladly eat them raw. If there is any truth in this, it may be that certain Perioikoi – perhaps among the elite – had come to resent the burdens imposed by Sparta in way they had not done before. Possibly they were expected to make a greater contribution to the military machine, now that Spartiate manpower was diminishing. Some such change is needed to explain why Xenophon thought that the Perioikoi hated Sparta, and why they did eventually revolt in large numbers in 370/69.¹⁵

Whatever the Perioikoi in 399 thought of the Spartans, it is the consistency with which they remained loyal until then that is striking. If in some places the richer Perioikoi, or in others the poor, felt animosity towards their Spartan masters, the feeling was rarely so widespread as to be translated into action. There were benefits to be had by serving Sparta. It may even be that in many parts of Lakonia the prevailing attitude to Sparta – a relatively far-off place – was one of indifference.

We can set aside, once for all, the notion that economic freedom led to an amelioration of the position of the Perioikoi, palliating the burden of Spartan control; not because they were not economically free (though they were not), but because the link between economic activity and freedom was not the same then as it is held to be now. We should not expect the Perioikoi to be prosperous simply because they were allowed to trade. The reason why they did not prosper is that Sparta stopped them. Even the better-off communities did not share the benefits of urbanization and broadly democratic change that other southern Greeks enjoyed.

The very term used to describe the semi-free inhabitants of Lakonia and Messenia – Perioikoi, ‘those who dwell around’ – connotes a subordinate relationship. Those who dwell around what? Around Sparta, obviously; more relevantly perhaps, from the Spartans’ point of view, ‘around us’. The name was surely invented by a Spartan; or possibly by an Athenian looking at

Lakonia as a citizen of a powerful, urbanized citizen-state that relied on unfree labour. Presumably Perioikoi identified each other by the *ethnika* ['nationalities'] of their own towns. Although we are stuck with the name, we should not be hoodwinked by this piece of 'Spartocentric' terminology into forgetting that the Perioikoi had a life and culture all their own.

Perioikic societies, in short, were 'typical' Greek societies. They shared Greek language, culture and religion. They were mostly farmers; they provided hoplites for an army; some of them traded and fished, or made pots and shields. The evidence reviewed here compels us to see them, in addition, as a plurality of societies, many of them remote from Sparta and even from each other, which were never in a position seriously to challenge Spartan power. On the contrary, they had a stake in that power; it was all that they were offered.

We hear little of them in ancient sources because they took no military and political decisions in their own right; but this does not mean they were without initiative or an identity. Once they are freed from Spartan control, a process that began in the fourth century, it is as if the 'natural' human geography of rural Lakonia is restored. Perioikic Lakonia begins to change in parallel with the rest of the Peloponnese, most obviously in developing federal structures like those of Arkadia and Achaea. Only by such political means could the Perioikoi resist the efforts of kings like Kleomenes III to regain control over them.

We would do well to bear in mind the words of the late Professor Andrewes, who knew Lakonia well and perceived the importance of the Perioikoi: 'With all the admiration lavished by Xenophon and others on Spartan military virtue, it is important to remember how much of it actually belongs to the perioikoi'.¹⁶ As for the interpretations offered above, only new archaeological evidence will allow us to test them, and answer some of the questions I have left open. It is all the more urgent that this evidence be gathered, in view of the pace of agricultural change in Greece and the damage to fragile archaeological environments that will result.

† Reprinted from *Philolakon*, ed. J. M. Sanders, London: British School at Athens, 1992; by permission of the British School at Athens, and of the author.

¹ [W. G. Forrest, *A History of Sparta 950–192 BC* (London 1968)] 30–34 *passim*.

² For the traditional view see R. M. Cook, "Spartan history and archaeology," *CQ* 56 (n.s. 12) (1962) 156–58. [P. A. Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History 1300–362 BC* (London 1979), admonishes R. T. Ridley, 'The Economic Activities of the Perioikoi', *Mnemosyne* 27, 1974, 281–92,] for claiming that the 'still standard view' of the Perioikoi is that they were 'basically an industrial and commercial class' (Ridley 291), and taxes him with setting up an Aunt Sally. Lest it be thought that I am setting up precisely the same Aunt Sally, I give a few references to what is patently still the 'standard view' in some of the most widely read literature. Until recently, the major focuses of post-war work in English were the racial origins of the Perioikoi and the extent of Spartan territory under the Romans. Occasionally the Perioikoi are mentioned as the practitioners of all (or most) trading and manufacturing in Lakonia. For traditional approaches (some giving more space than others to perioikic 'commerce') see e.g. [K. M. T. Chrimes, *Ancient Sparta: A Re-examination of the Evidence* (Manchester 1949), Chs 2, 8; H. Michell, *Sparta* (Cambridge 1952), 64–74; A. H. M. Jones, *Sparta* (Oxford 1967), 8] and J. T. Hooker, *The Ancient Spartans* (London 1980) 134–35. Further examples are given by Ridley (n. 12). The index to L. F. Fitzharding's excellent book *The Spartans* (London 1981) omits the Perioikoi, but his views of them (21–22, 41–42, 155, 163) are soundly based.

³ I adopt the translation of polis suggested by W. G. Runciman, "Doomed to extinction: the polis as an evolutionary dead-end," in O. Murray and S. Price, eds., *The Greek City: From Homer to Alexander* (Oxford 1990) 347–67, at p. 348. For perioikic settlements as poleis see e.g. Hdt. 7. 234; Th. 5. 54; [Xen., *Hell.* 6. 5. 21; *Agés.* 2; (Xen.) *Lac. Pol.* 15]. Further refs.: Cartledge, *Sparta* 185; 178 discusses the issue briefly.

⁴ Paus. 10. 4. 1, often quoted out of context.

⁵ [R. Osborne, *Classical Landscape with Figures* (London 1987)] 121–23.

⁶ For Spartan discouragement of unions between perioikic towns see Cartledge, *Sparta* 185–87.1 cannot accept the suggestion of [J. A. O. Larsen, in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (2nd edn, Oxford 1970) s.v. 'Perioikoi'] that Classical Laconia was like a federal state.

⁷ Cartledge, *Sparta* 180.

⁸ See e.g. [M. I. Finley, 'Sparta and Spartan Society', in id., *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece* (London 1981), 25–40, 253–5, at] 29–30.

⁹ Th. 4. 55. Of course Spartiatai may have been deployed regularly in frontier zones; cf. [J. Christien and T. Spyropoulos, 'Eua et le Thyréatide – topographie et histoire', *BCH* 109, 1985, 455–66,] on the Thyreatis.

¹⁰ Cartledge, *Sparta*, 179, referring to [Xen., *Hell.*] 5. 3. 9 (380 BC).

¹¹ [M. M. Austin and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Economic and Social History of Ancient Greece* (London 1977),] date the change after the earthquake and Helot revolt of the 460s. Cf. also Cartledge, *Sparta*, 179. Forrest, *Sparta*, 133–34 favours a later date.

¹² A similar judgement is reached by [P. Cartledge, *Agésilaos and the Crisis of Sparta* (London 1987),] 177–78. Cf. the words of E. A. Freeman in 1893 (quoted by Cartledge 177): 'the Perioikoi had as much interest in suppressing a Helot revolt as the Spartans themselves'.

¹³ Cartledge, *Sparta*, 180, referring to Th. 1. 101 (Perioikoi of Thouria and Aithaia).

¹⁴ [Xen., *Hell.*] 3. 3. For a good discussion see Cartledge, *Sparta*, 312–14 (also 273–75). See also Cartledge, *Agésilaos* (n. 12) 177–79.

¹⁵ [Xen., *Hell.*] 7. 2. 2.

¹⁶ [A. Andrewes, *Greek Society* (Harmondsworth 1971); = *The Greeks* (London 1967),] 165.

10 *The Helot Threat*[†]

G. E. M. DE STE CROIX

The cardinal fact about Sparta¹ is her uniquely dangerous position as mistress of the Helots, above all the Messenian Helots. Most of the Helots, according to Thucydides (I 101.2), were descendants of the Messenians of old, conquered by Sparta, and so all the Helots came to be called Messenians. Sparta was the one Greek state which held in total subjection large numbers of fellow Greeks, who never lost their consciousness of being Messenians (we might call it loosely a 'national consciousness'), who might revolt at any time when a good opportunity arrived, and who ultimately did revolt successfully, in 370/69, with outside help, and re-establish the ancient *polis* of Messene (*hoi Messēnioi*), after it had been in abeyance for many generations.² The response to a Theban call for Messenian exiles to return and re-found their city was enthusiastic: they came from Italy, Sicily and Cyrenaica, from 'yearning for their fatherland and hatred of the Spartans' (Paus. IV xxvi.5).

The status of the Helots (Laconian as well as Messenian) is best described in modern terminology by calling them 'State serfs'. The Greeks had no regular technical term for serfdom, and the Spartans commonly referred to the Helots as their 'slaves' (*douloi*); but we can best call them *serfs*, because they were attached to the lands they worked (and could therefore enjoy, if precariously, a family life), and *State serfs*, because they belonged to the Spartan *polis* and could not be manumitted by the individual Spartiates to whom they were granted out (see esp. Strabo VIII v.4, p. 365, including Ephorus, *FGrH* 70 F 117; also Paus. HI xx.6). Now all other Greek cities owned slaves, sometimes in considerable numbers; but they were a heterogeneous, polyglot mass (cf. Ps.-Arist., [*Oeconomicus*] I vi, 1344^b18), who could often communicate with each other only in their masters' language, and who might run away individually or in small batches but would virtually never attempt large-scale revolts. Only the Spartans lived on top of a potentially active human volcano. In Sparta, therefore, more than in any other Greek state, we can see a real and bitter class war, with full Spartiates and Helots at its opposite poles, an intermediate position being occupied by the Perioikoi and those Spartans who lacked full political rights – *hypomeiones*, as they may have been called, although the term occurs only once, in Xenophon (*Hell.* III iii.6). In most other Greek states it is useless to look for manifestations of an active class struggle between citizens and slaves, because the slaves were mainly inert and helpless and in no position to conduct any kind of collective resistance, whereas their masters were always ready to unite against them. 'Citizens', said Xenophon (*Hiero* IV 3), 'act as unpaid bodyguards of each other against their slaves'. The kind of

class struggle which does force itself upon our attention again and again throughout Greek history (and much of Roman history) is mainly that between rich and poor *citizens*. Marx, in a letter to Engels of 8 March 1855, gave a general characterisation of the internal history of Republican Rome as ‘the struggle of small versus large landed property, specifically modified, of course, by slave conditons’.³ We may think of the internal history of most Greek cities in a similar way, above all in terms of a struggle between the propertied classes and the poor, precisely as many Greek thinkers did, from Solon to Aristotle (cf. Chapter I, Part iii above [*Origins*, 34–49]). In Sparta, the conflict was much more sharply polarised between Spartiates and Helots; it was both more open and more intense and bitter than elsewhere.

The conquest of Messenia gave Sparta some of the most fertile land in Greece and an ample supply of State serfs to till it. But because of the refusal of the Messenians to submit quietly, the Spartans were driven to organise themselves as a community of professional soldiers, dedicated not (like many militaristic peoples) to foreign conquest – which might prove highly dangerous if it extended Spartan commitments too far – but above all to maintaining strict internal discipline and harmony, so that a united body of Spartiates could ruthlessly dominate their numerous Helots and Perioikoi. The Greeks realised the simple fact (stated as such by Plato’s Socrates) that changes in a State begin from dissension among the ruling class, and that the constitution cannot be upset as long as that class is united, small though it may be (Plato, *Rep.* VIII 545d). As long as the rulers are not at variance among themselves, the rest will not be at odds with them or with each other (V 465b). Aristotle speaks in much the same vein: an oligarchy which preserves harmony inside itself will not easily be overthrown from within (*Pol.* V 6, 1306^a9–10). The famous *eunomia* of Sparta was carefully constructed to maintain unity among Spartiates.⁴ But Spartan life, which until well into the seventh century resembled that of any other progressive Greek state, and in some artistic fields was outstandingly creative, was now miserably impoverished. In the apt words put into the mouth of King Archidamus III by Isocrates (VI 81), doing his poor best to produce a panegyric of Sparta, the government of that city was ‘like that of a military camp, well administered and willingly obeying its commanders’. Like Fafner, who after appropriating the Rhinemaidens’ treasure was obliged to turn himself into a dragon and live a nasty life in a cave, the Spartans could never again relax and enjoy the cultural and intellectual life which was the birthright of so many other Greeks of the propertied classes. Aristotle, of all surviving ancient writers, expresses this most clearly: the Spartans, he says, by imposing on their young men exercises designed solely to impart courage, have made them ‘beast-like’ (*thēriōdeis*, *Pol.* VIII 4, 1338^b9–38, esP. II–19; cf. II 9, 1271^b2–6; VII 14, 1333^b11–21; 15, 1334^a40–^b3); and ‘now that the Spartans no longer rule over others, it is clear that they are not a happy people and that their legislator was not a good one’ (VII 14, 1333^b21–5).

It is unnecessary to dwell at length upon the mutual detestation of

Spartiates and Helots, which is well known and amply documented. Sometimes Helots (mainly Laconian ones, no doubt, rather than Messenians) might give loyal service to Sparta, in response to a promise of freedom: we hear of some during the Pylos affair in 424 (Thuc. IV 26.5–7); 700 went out as hoplites with Brasidas in the same year (IV 80.5; V 34.1); ‘the best of the Helots and of the Neodamodeis’,⁵ 600 altogether, sailed as hoplites to Sicily in 413 (VII 19.3; 58.3); in the fourth century, Helots served as rowers in the Spartan fleet (Xen., *Hell.* VII i.12); and over 6,000 are said by Xenophon, perhaps with some exaggeration, to have joined in the defence of Sparta against the invading army of Epaminondas in 370–69.⁶ We also hear, between 421–18 and 370–69, of Neodamodeis serving as hoplites in the Spartan army, sometimes in considerable numbers: in view of the definitions in Pollux (III 83) and Hesychius (s.v.), we must presumably conclude that these were emancipated Helots, freed on enrolment in the Spartan army. The basic relationship between the Spartiates and at any rate the Messenian Helots, however, was one of fear and hatred on both sides. Of the evidence, it will be sufficient to cite four passages.⁷

1. Arist., fr. 538, *ap.* Plut., *Lyc.* 28.7 (just after a reference to the *krypteia*): the ephors, immediately after entering upon office each year, made a formal declaration of war upon the Helots, so that killing them might be ‘lawful’ – *euages*, not ‘unholy’, not incurring the religious pollution (*agos*) that came from killing anyone inside one’s own borders without ‘due process of law’, except an enemy of the State. The careful religiosity for which the Spartans were famous allowed them to cut the throats of their Helots at will, provided only they had gone through the legal formality of declaring them ‘enemies of the State’. (This kind of religious scruple reminds one of the Roman way of getting round their own rule forbidding the execution of a virgin – by having the executioner rape her first: [Tacitus, *Annals* V 9.3; Cassius Dio LVIII 11.5; Suetonius, *Tiberius* 61.5].

2. Arist., *Pol.* II 9, 1269^a38–9: the Helots, who often revolt, lie in wait, as it were, to take advantage of the Spartans’ misfortunes.

3. Thuc. IV 80.3: Spartan policy is always mainly governed by the necessity of taking precautions against the Helots.⁸

4. Thuc. IV 80.3–4: in 424, after the occupation of Pylos by the Athenians, the Spartans were alarmed by the prospect of a Helot revolt (cf. IV 41.2–3; 55.1; V 14.3). In fear of the obstinacy of the Helots and their great numbers, they made a proclamation, promising freedom to those Helots who claimed to have done most service to Sparta in her wars – for the Spartans thought that those Helots who came forward first to claim their freedom would be the most self-confident and also the most likely to revolt. Some 2,000 were chosen: they were crowned with garlands and went the round of the temples, as if now free. But soon afterwards they were all done away with, and no one knew how each of them perished.

It was not only the Helots who hated the Spartiates. Cinadon, the leader of an abortive revolt in the first year of the reign of King Agesilaus II (Xen., *Hell.* III iii.4–11), probably 400–399, said that any Helot, Neodamodes, *hypomeiōn* or Perioikos – anyone, in fact, below the class of *homoioi*, the Spartiates who alone had full political rights – would be delighted to eat the Spartiates raw. This no doubt exaggerates the extent of the resentment against the Spartiates, for even the Perioikoi, the class next lowest in the scale after the Helots, are rarely recorded to have given way to disaffection:⁹ Xenophon (*Hell.* V iii.9) can apply to some of them a term (*kaloi kagathoi*) only used for gentlemen of good social position (see the Additional Note at the end of Appendix XXIX below [*Origins*, 371–6, which provides a thorough review of the evidence]); and on occasion we find a Perioikos employed by the State on a confidential mission (Thuc. VIII 6.4) and even in command of a detachment of the fleet (22.1). But Xenophon, a lifelong Spartophile, was hardly likely to record (or invent) such a remark unless it had a certain element of real truth.

The Spartan, then, was ‘ever on the strain, holding, as it were, a wolf by the throat’.¹⁰ Sparta’s uniquely insecure position demanded that she isolate herself completely from outside attack, which might encourage the Helots to rise. It is a striking fact that the very first time a large hostile army of good hoplites penetrated deeply into the Peloponnese, in 370/69 under Epaminondas, Sparta lost Messenia and lost the firm control she had had for much of the last two hundred years over Arcadia, and she sank to the position of a second-rate power.

† Reprinted by permission of the author from *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, London: Duckworth, 1972.

¹ Books on Sparta are numerous and mostly bad. The best in English is [W. G. Forrest, *A History of Sparta 950–192 BC* (London, 1968)]; but this is very brief (only 160 pages). In French, see especially F. Ollier, *Le mirage spartiate* (2 vols., Paris, 1933 and 1943); and P. Roussel, *Sparte*² (Paris, 1960). [E. N. Tigerstedt, *The Legend of Sparta in Classical Antiquity* (Stockholm, 1965–79),] 1, is useful not so much for any illumination it provides as for the great quantity of bibliographical material in its notes (pp. 310–591). Among the few articles particularly worth reading, apart from those mentioned below, are C. G. Starr, ‘The Credibility of Early Spartan History’, in *Historia* 14 (1965) 257–72; M. I. Finley, ‘Sparta’, in *Problèmes de la guerre en Grèce ancienne*, ed. J.-P. Vernant (Paris, 1968) 143–60. Still invaluable is V. Ehrenberg, in *RE*, 2te Reihe, m (1929) col. 1373–1453, s.v. ‘Sparta (Geschichte)’.

² I would date the First Messenian war in the late eighth century and the Second in the mid-seventh. The *polis* of Messene may have ceased officially to exist as such at the end of either the First war or the Second. I doubt if Epaminondas’ alleged figure of 230 years from 370/69, i.e. 600 B.C. (Plut., *Mor.* 194b; Ael., *VH* XIII 42, accepted by [A. H. M. Jones, *Sparta* (Oxford, 1967),] 4), has a secure basis, any more than those of e.g. Isoc. VI 27 and [Dinarchus 1 (*against Demosthenes*)] 73 (400 years) or [Lycurgus, *against Leocrates*] 62 (500 years). If I had to choose between the various alternative dates for the end of the Second Messenian war given by, or deducible from, the ancient sources, I would prefer 657/6, i.e. 287 years before 370/69, given by Paus. IV xxvii.9 (against xxiii.4).

³ Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels. *Correspondence 1846–1895*, a selection translated by Dona Torr (London, 1934, 1936) 127. For the German original, see K. Marx & F. Engels, *Briefwechsel* (Berlin, 1949) 2.105, no. 349; also E. Ch. Welskopf, *Die Produktionsverhältnisse im alten Orient und in der griechisch-römischen Antike* (Berlin, 1957) 197 ff.

⁴ I agree with [H. T. Wade-Gery, *Essays in Greek History* (Oxford, 1958, 37–85), and A. Toynbee, *Some Problems in Greek History* (London, 1969),] 221–6, 250–60, 413–16, that the ‘Lycurgan’ reorganisation is to be dated shortly after the Second Messenian war (and not before it, as by Forrest, Jones etc.: for this view, which seems to me to have little to recommend it, see esp. [Forrest, *Sparta*,] 55–8, and ‘The Date of

the Lykourgan Reforms in Sparta', in *Phoenix* 17 [1963] 157–79). The much earlier dates advocated by e.g. N. G. L. Hammond, 'The Lycurgean Reform at Sparta', in *JHS* 70 (1950) 42–64; and [K. M. T. Chrimes, *Ancient Sparta: A Re-examination of the Evidence* (Manchester, 1949),] 305–47 etc., seem to me entirely indefensible.

⁵ For the Neodamodeis, see Andrewes, in Gomme, [A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, 5 vols (Oxford, 1945–81), IV 35–6; G. Busolt and H. Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde* (Munich, 1920–6, II 668; U. Kahrstedt, *Griechisches Staatsrecht*, I. *Sparta und seine Symmachie* (Göttingen, 1922), 46–8]. Against the view of the Neodamodeis taken by R. F. Willetts, in *CP* 49 (1954) 27–32, see Toynbee, *Some Problems*, 201 n. 2. About 1,000 Neodamodeis went to Asia with Thibron in 400 (Xen., *Hell.* III i.4), and about 2,000 with Agesilaus in 396 (III iv.2). And see I iii.15; V ii.24; VI i.14; v.24. The Neodamodeis are distinguished by Thucydides both from the 'Brasideioi' (the Helots who had been freed *after* fighting with Brasidas: V 34.1 and 67.1, with 71.3 and 72.3) and from Helots serving as hoplites while still Helots (VII 19.3; 58.3).

⁶ Xen., *Hell.* VI v.28–9. But Diod. XV 65.6 gives the number of 1,000 and Xen. himself (VII ii.2) speaks of 'all the Helots' as well as 'many Perioikoi' as revolting from Sparta after Leuctra. Perhaps all the Messenian Helots revolted, while many Laconian ones remained faithful to their masters.

⁷ I omit various texts from later authors, such as Athen. XIV 657cd (= Myron, *FGrH* 106 F 2).

⁸ According to [Gomme, *Historical Commentary on Thucydides*,] III 547–8, the wordorder demands some such translation as 'most of the relations between the Lacedaemonians and the Helots were of an eminently precautionary character'. That may be right.

⁹ The main examples are those mentioned in Thuc. 1101.2 (c. 464); and Xen., *Hell.* IV v.25, 32 and VII ii.2 (370–69). Cf. also VII iv.21 (Sciritis had apparently revolted). Perioikoi were increasingly used as hoplites. Cf. Isoc. XII 177–81, also exaggerated, but partly true.

¹⁰ [G. B. Grundy, *Thucydides and the History of his Age*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1948), I] 219. Grundy has some good things to say about Spartan foreign policy, but he is sometimes very unreliable, e.g. on the question of the numbers of Spartiates, Perioikoi and Helots.

11 *The Obligations of Helots*[†]

JEAN DUCAT

translated by Sam Coombes

A FUNCTION

Another possible approach to the Helot phenomenon consisted in defining this social group by the function which it fulfilled in Sparta. This approach seemed straightforward, and yet it too encountered serious problems.

1 As we have observed, the Helots can be seen to have had applied to them names which are common to all types of slaves, for example *doulos* and its derivatives, *oiketes* (household slave) and so on. This implies that they too were seen to be fulfilling *a many-sided role in production and services*. This is what is indicated by the texts which report that all work and financial gain were forbidden to Spartiates. Plutarch concludes an instructive anecdote as follows: ‘since they [the Spartiates] regarded as servile the concern to pursue a profession and earn money’ (*Lyc.* 24.3). This clause echoes a passage from *Republic* (8, 547d) where Plato, in his definition of the timocratic system, is clearly thinking of Sparta: ‘because fighters do not engage in agriculture, manual tasks and other lucrative activity’. In the *Lycurgus-Numa Comparison* (2.7), Plutarch also states, ‘for it was not even permissible for free men to earn money, so that they should be completely and utterly free; but concern for financial matters was limited to slaves and Helots, just like service at table and in the kitchen’ (I will return to the problem posed by the expression ‘slaves and Helots’). The *Suda* entry for Lycurgus includes the following: ‘he assigned other tasks to the Helots, but military activity to those of good birth [Spartiates]’ (cf. Maximus of Tyre, *Oration* 23.2, 102a). What was forbidden to Spartiates was automatically reserved for Helots; at this highly theoretical level the sources do not have the Perioikoi involved in production.

2 In this situation, the definition presented in certain sources of Helots as *slaves working the land* seems to be the result of a process of abstraction which sought to identify what was essential and specific in their role. Thus Aristotle writes, ‘it is the Helots who farm the land for the benefit of the former [the Spartans]’ (*Pol.* 2, 1271b.41); also ‘that those who farm the land should, above all, be slaves, but neither all of the same race nor quick to revolt’ (*Pol.* 7, 1330a.25–7), where the implicit but clear reference to Plato (*Laws* 6, 777b) shows that Aristotle was thinking of the Helots. Note also the following: ‘entrusting the fields to them’ (Myron, fr. 2), and ‘the Helots used to farm the land for their benefit’ (Plut., *Lyc.* 24.2; *Inst. Lac.* 41, 239D). In his account of the

revolt of 464, which is presented as a Helot revolt, Plutarch has the Helots coming from the fields (*Cim.* 16), while Livy calls them a 'rural people' (34.27.9). Strabo's phrase, 'assigning them individually dwellings and particular tasks' (8.5.40), is quite obscure but must correspond to the same notion, and it relates to another term used by Livy (*loc. cit.*), 'inhabitants of estates'. To these texts can be added a saying attributed by Plutarch to Cleomenes: 'Cleomenes son of Anaxandridas used to say that if Homer was the poet of the Spartans, Hesiod was the poet of the Helots, because Homer had given instruction in how to fight and Hesiod in how to work the land' (*Spartan Sayings, Cleomenes* 1 = 233A; cf. Ael., *VH* 13.19).¹ The idea of a 'poet of the Helots' is clearly ironic, but what matters is the very Platonic complementary opposition of fighters and farmers: people of all sorts are needed to make a city. It can thus be said that there exists in the tradition a marked tendency to conceive Helotism as a rural slavery.

3 But this does not prevent the Helots from being regarded as household slaves as well.² This applies, first, to young Helots, the *mothones*, who fulfilled the role of small servants for Spartiate children;³ Plato states in *Laws* (1, 633c) that the *krypteia* was excluded from these services,⁴ which plainly illustrates that, for him, it was normal for these servants to attend young Spartiates during the rest of the *agoge*. It is abundantly clear that adults also needed servants, and they are in fact often mentioned, for example in Herodotus (servants of Ariston: 6.63), Xenophon (servants of Agesilaus: *Hell.* 5.4.28; individual servants: *Lac. Pol.* 7.5) and Polybius (servants of King Lyscurgus: 4.81.7; 5.29.9). Nevertheless, there is still the problem of knowing whether all these instances might not relate to bought slaves, which would mean that Helots could be restricted to the role of production. But there is one text which shows without a doubt that Helots were regarded as potential domestic servants: Plutarch presents Timaea, wife of Agis, conversing 'with the Helot women' (*Ages.* 3.2). What of the presence at Sparta of bought slaves? G. B. Bruni cites texts relating to two people who had been slaves at Sparta:⁵ the first is the poet Alcman, who was liberated by his master Agesidas;⁶ the other is Philoxenus, an inhabitant of Cythera who was reduced to slavery by the Spartiates, like all his fellow citizens, became the slave of a certain Agesylus, and was subsequently sold to Melanippides the Athenian.⁷ One should probably not give full credence to these stories, although the conquest of Cythera did happen even if we cannot date it – but the Cytherans were more probably Helotized. The fact remains, however, that the existence of personal slaves who could be sold abroad was considered a possibility, at least in the Hellenistic period.

With regard to sale abroad, one should also note the Spartan cook who was purchased either by Dionysius of Syracuse or by a 'king of Pontus', according to different versions of an anecdote reported by Plutarch.⁸ In a more impersonal manner two texts juxtapose Helots and slaves at Sparta. In [Plato] *Alc. I* (122d) it is stated that the Spartiates became wealthy 'through possession

of slaves and especially of Helots', as if the city had the ability to increase its stock of slaves. More clearly, Plutarch separates slaves and Helots (*Lycurgus–Numa Comparison* 2, cited above).⁹ Therefore, were there really bought slaves at Sparta, and, if so, at what period did this begin? I do not see what could enable us to answer these questions.¹⁰ It is reasonable to suppose that the great 'imperialist' period which followed the victory of 404 is a plausible context for the introduction into Sparta, by great individuals and in a manner which was not typical of normal behaviour, of slaves purchased abroad; certain slaves who were highly trained in professional occupations (artists, doctors, teachers, even cooks as in the anecdote above) could thus be imported. In any case our problem lies rather at the level of images: now, here too it is impossible to say whether an author who speaks of a 'servant' at Sparta is thinking of a Helot or a bought slave (if he so much as asks himself the question). The key point is the obvious fact that the Helots could be thought of as servants. When Theopompus wished to contrast slaves of the Helot type with bought slaves, he did not use function as a distinguishing criterion.

From the functional point of view, Helotism was thus seen as dual. On the one hand the Helots were slaves of the normal kind and, as such, were regarded as capable, in particular, of undertaking domestic tasks. On the other, within this system they had a more common or more typical occupation, which was agriculture. Cornelius Nepos expresses this very well, 'they till the Spartans' fields and perform the duties of slaves' (*Pausanias* 3.6). We must affirm that occupation did not allow a clear and distinct conception of Helotism either.

B OPERATION

1 The advantages of Helotism

There is no doubt that, at a certain period, an image of the economic status of Helots was constructed which had an aspect that was clearly favourable. At the heart of this image was the *apophora*, the tax which Helots were supposed to pay their master and which was their only economic obligation. The writer who conveys this most clearly is Plutarch, because he is the only one whose complete analyses have come down to us: 'the Helots worked the land for their benefit, paying the tax fixed at the outset. It was accursed to make them pay more, in order that the Helots, by benefiting, would obey voluntarily, while the masters could not ask for more' (*Inst. Lac.* 41 = 239D). Plutarch stresses the fixed level of the tax, the amount at which it was set at the outset and at which it was supposed to remain; 'accursed' gives a religious dimension to the Spartiates' commitment to keep it to that. He insists also on the contractual aspect: there was an exchange of services, with the Helots working the land and paying the tax, but the Spartiates guaranteeing their economic security by keeping the amount stable. As each group found this advantageous, the system

functioned wonderfully. We can identify the ideological context for such a conception: that of the contract of slavery. In one of the texts which develops this idea at greatest length, Archemachus of Euboea on the Penestae (cited by Athenaeus 6, 264A–B; discussion at Ducat, *Hilotes*, p. 71), it is stated that ‘many of them [Penestae] are richer than their masters’. Plutarch certainly does not go that far with regard to the Helots, but by ‘benefiting’ he indicates that stability was not the only positive aspect of their status; they could also make a profit because of the low level of the *apophora*. In his *Life of Lycurgus* the wording, whilst identical in certain respects, is much less explicit: ‘the Helots worked the land for them, paying the aforementioned tax’ (24.2). Here ‘aforementioned’ can only refer to 8.7.¹¹ Now, what Plutarch had discussed in that passage was not the tax which each Helot paid, but the income that each Spartiate received from his *kleros* (allotment). For the two to have coincided, it would have been necessary for each *kleros* to have had only one Helot, that is one Helot family. This is, apparently, what Plutarch wanted to believe (without, however, formulating the problem), but it is almost impossible for us to go along with him. Even by lumping together Helot servants and Helot farmers, we would still be far from what must have been the real proportion of slaves to citizens at Sparta, and the impression that there were numerous families of Helots on each estate is supported by a very significant detail to be found in Xenophon’s account of the conspiracy of Cinadon (*Hell.* 3.3.5).

As a result there are two things that we can state. The first, which is obvious, is that the *apophora* system as described by Plutarch operated, and could only operate, in the context of the *kleros* system: the tax was fixed and equal only because the allocations of land possessed the same characteristics. As a result the *apophora* comes to be connected, in terms of our knowledge and belief, with the fate of the *kleros*, whatever that might be. The second is that, in spite of Plutarch’s linkage of *apophora* as tax and as income, the interaction between the two systems operated in a manner which beggars belief, since these are actually two different sorts of concept: the *apophora* as an economic rent is the yield from a piece of land, the product of work; the income which the Spartiate receives (still in the account of Plutarch) is a civic rent, calculated in practice with regard not to its origin but to its destination (namely to allow the citizen to live his life ‘as is proper’), as if the Helot was no more than a type of agent who paid on behalf of the state. Whatever one thinks about the system of ownership at Sparta in other respects, it must be conceded that there is an air of unreality about this.

It was necessary to begin with Plutarch in order to understand properly Myron’s much more concise statement, ‘entrusting the fields to them, they established the amount they would pay in perpetuity’.¹² Here we find the key aspect of the contract of slavery, namely the exchange of services: the Spartiates ‘entrust’ the land to the Helots, that is to say they authorize them to stay on it and live off it, while harvesting a tax whose fixed level was guaranteed forever. The only difference from Plutarch lies in the term used to

refer to this tax: it is not *apophora*, which, as we shall see, is a technical term which characterizes a specific servile status, but a portion (*moira*), which, while being less clear since it can also have different meanings and indicate a proportion rather than an amount, better expresses the fact that the rent was paid in kind. The state of the text does not permit us to say whether Myron connected this image with a sort of ‘*kleros* system’.

Do we encounter, in texts earlier than the third century, which is a crucial moment in the history of the Spartan myth, trustworthy indications of an ‘*apophora* system’? Some have thought they have found one in the passage of Plato’s *Laws* which introduces the exposition on the lifestyle of citizens in a system where ‘the business of cultivation would be reserved for slaves who paid from the produce of the land a proportion (*aparche*) sufficient for men who live orderly lives’ (7, 806d–e). How, indeed, can one avoid thinking of Sparta – or at least of its idealized image – in a context in which there are equal plots of land, shared incomes and communal meals? According to Morrow, followed by Klees,¹³ Plato was not making an exact allusion to Sparta. Indeed when he deals in detail (admittedly in an obscure manner) with the issue of the distribution of the produce of the land in the next book (8, 847e–848c), it is noticeable that this takes place very differently from what Plutarch describes at Sparta – the opposite way round even, since it is the citizens who pay back to the slaves a proportion which they ultimately use as they wish, at least from the qualitative point of view. It is clear to us that Plato spoke of a proportion, *aparche*, and not of a tax, *apophora*.

This was the very word which, by contrast, Herodotus used with regard to the reform which he attributed to Sesostris (2.109): he had divided the land equally between all Egyptians, allocating to each an equal, square plot of land, on the basis of which he had established his income, ‘setting the tax, *apophora*, to be paid annually’. Sesostris’ reform clearly recalls the one which would be attributed to Lycurgus but of which, it is important to stress, Herodotus knew nothing. All the same, there is one major difference: Egyptian peasants were never, and would never be, slaves. It appears, then, to be totally impossible that, when Herodotus was writing this passage, he was thinking of a Spartiate model which, as far as we know, did not exist in his day.

Thus it is not only by its organic link with the ‘*kleros* system’, but also in so far as it is linked with the ideology expressed by the ‘contract of slavery’, that the ‘*apophora* system’ is revealed to be a fiction, of the Hellenistic period, let us say. We will see later (Ducat, *Hilotes*, 91–3) why it was felt necessary at that time to justify Helotism.

2 Slaves who pay the *apophora*

There was indeed a system of exploiting servile labour which took the name *apophora*: it was a feature of both Classical Athens and Graeco-Roman Egypt.¹⁴ This practice, which is similar to the renting of slaves but is

distinguished from it by terminology, is described as follows by I. Biezunska-Malowist: 'There were also slaves who carried out their work independently. They generally lived away from their owner's house, to whom they only paid a sort of periodic tribute called *apophora*' (II, 106). This definition can also be applied to Classical Athens, if one takes account of the fact that the key to this status was not that slaves lived apart but that they worked apart. The most illuminating example is that of Timarchus, whose father, Aeschines says, left him 'nine or ten slaves, specialists in cutting leather, each of whom brought him two obols per day, in addition to the foreman who brought him three' (Aeschines 1.97). There is no indication whether these slaves were independent workers or paid employees; without doubt Diocleides' slave who worked at Laurion and who paid *apophora* to his master was a paid employee.¹⁵ In this case it is quite difficult for us to draw a theoretical distinction between the slave who was rented out (*misthophoroun soma*) and the slave who paid *apophora*. In Athens it seems that the distinction depended on the method of payment, with the rent (*misthos*) being paid from master to master whilst the *apophora* was paid by the slave. In Egypt, according to I. Biezunska-Malowist, this was not the case:

the difference between the *apophora* and the *misthos* ... consisted in the fact that *misthos* was a term used to denote a salary, remuneration in general paid for the slave's work by the person employing him without regard to the question of whether the sum was paid to the slave or to the owner. On the other hand, *apophora* indicates the profit, the financial benefit that the slave brought his master, and this term was hence in common use when we consider this benefit from the point of view of relations between the owner and the slave.

Was this a real difference in Athens, where an independent artisan class of slaves perhaps existed, and only an apparent difference in Egypt? This is not the place to discuss the matter; it is sufficient for our purposes to identify that historical basis on which texts dating from after the fourth century created their image of the economic status of the Helots.

Now it is immediately apparent that between the *apophora* of which we know and the one described by Plutarch there is no relationship, so to speak, except that both were payments. One is paid in money, the other in kind; in the former case it refers to income from artisanal work, in the latter to that from agricultural work. In Sparta the slave worked on his master's estate, whereas at Athens and in Egypt his labour power was deployed externally. These particular differences are expressions of a more basic one: the real system of *apophora* operated as part of the most advanced systems of chattel-slavery, where salaried work was a significant factor, whereas the system described by Plutarch is supposed to correspond to an agricultural economy of the most traditional kind.

3 *The economic status of the Helots*

If we acknowledge – even if only for the sake of methodological caution – that the ‘*apophora* system’ was a concept developed in the Hellenistic period in parallel to the ‘*kleros* system’ with the intention of presenting a favourable image of ‘Lycurgan’ Helotism, what evidence is there at our disposal to assess the ‘real’ economic situation of the Helots in the Classical period? It is impossible to avoid confronting the problems posed by Tyrtaeus, fr. 5, from which one can infer, according to some, that the Helots were share-croppers.¹⁶ These are the five verses quoted by Pausanias (4.14.4–5) in support of the description which he had just given of the harsh conditions imposed on the Messenians after the conquest. In the first place, they made them swear an oath that they would never revolt against them and that they would refrain from all revolutionary acts. Second, they enjoined that there would be no stated tribute, but that they should bring to Sparta half of all their agricultural produce. Lastly, it was prescribed that Messenians, together with their wives dressed in black, should attend the funerals of kings and prominent people; offenders were punished. In his poems Tyrtaeus spoke of the excessively harsh treatment that they inflicted on the Messenians: ‘like donkeys weighed down by heavy burdens, they brought to their masters half of the fruits of the earth, a grievous necessity’. As for the obligation of mourning, this is attested in the following passage: ‘They cry for their masters, both themselves and their wives, when the sad inevitability of death strikes one of them.’

Did Tyrtaeus’ poetry describe, as Pausanias supposed, the fate of the Messenians after the conquest? Here there is a problem because, if they were reduced to slavery in this way, how are we to interpret the rest of Pausanias’ account, in which we see them not only in revolt but leading a full hoplite war against the Spartans which placed the city in great peril – and this is confirmed by the whole work of Tyrtaeus? They also maintained a ‘foreign policy’ (an alliance with the Argives, Arcadians and Eleans), and in 684 a Messenian, Phanas, was victor at the Olympic Games. It is tempting, given this, to suppose that Pausanias had not read Tyrtaeus, that is to say that he did not have access to any verses other than those which he quotes; he had perhaps read someone who had read etc.... Thus, his interpretation might be incorrect; in any case it certainly distorts the meaning in many places. Other historians have advanced other hypotheses. Chrimes thought that Tyrtaeus’ poetry actually described the fate of the Messenians subjugated by their own aristocracy: but, then, why would Tyrtaeus speak of them derisively? Den Boer, followed by Prato, thought that Tyrtaeus’ poetry contained an abstract and general analysis of the fate of the defeated, since the verbs are participles, a fate which awaited the Spartans if they did not fight to the death: but the description is precise and concrete. None of these interpretations is satisfactory, and the continued ability of the Messenians to fight as hoplites may be explained in a more economical fashion by the hypothesis of a conquest that was only partial, or of

a fairly flexible form of subjection (Chrimes, Kiechle [see nn. 17, 21]).

Let us try to avoid becoming involved in this labyrinth of hypotheses. What is evident is the discrepancy between Pausanias' outlook and what can be understood of that of Tyrtaeus. The first clause, the oath, does not figure in Tyrtaeus: we can be certain that, if Pausanias had at his disposal a text about this, he would have cited it as he cites the others. On the third clause, the mourning, there are differences: Tyrtaeus speaks of 'masters', not of 'kings and prominent people'. Pausanias used this expression to bring Tyrtaeus into line with what Herodotus says about Spartiate customs (6.58): Herodotus only speaks of kings,¹⁷ and it is impossible to follow Pausanias when he alters 'masters' to 'prominent people'. Herodotus, in fact, emphasizes the mandatory participation of Spartiates and Perioikoi in the mourning for kings, whereas the Helots, whose presence he takes for granted, are certainly the Helots of Laconia, on his understanding. Hence, the combination of these elements in Pausanias is very unfortunate. Only the clause about the share-cropping system is trustworthy. As for the rest Pausanias clearly interpreted Tyrtaeus in the light of other sources and distorted everything in the desire to reconcile everything. That said, nothing permits us to think that this distortion affected the central issue, and that Tyrtaeus' verses were concerned with anything other than the fate of the Messenians after the conquest.

Let us try to pin down how Pausanias conceived this fate. In his commentary on Tyrtaeus (4.14.4–5), not only is Helotism not the issue but even the word 'slaves' does not appear. The image outlined is that of an 'imperialist' kind of subjection (prohibition of secession, tribute, mourning), but the vocabulary can be considered to have a servile tone. 'Revolt' (*apostenai*) and 'revolutionary acts' (*neoteron*) are, as we shall see¹⁸ words that are used to refer to the revolts of slaves. 'Bring to' (*apepheron*) harks back to the *apophora*, and 'excessively inflicted' (*hybrizon*) to Myron fr. 2. This ambiguity is also found in other passages. At 4.7.23 Pausanias specifies that the Messenians were only Helotized after the capture of Eira:¹⁹ 'The Spartans allocated them to the category of the Helots.' But at 4.8.2 the Spartiates address them, 'calling the Messenians their slaves already, in no way freer than Helots'. The word order shows that this is not an abusive anticipation: whilst not yet being Helots, the Messenians were already slaves.

Now, it seems that Pausanias has not in fact misrepresented Tyrtaeus in seeing things this way. Indeed, if the tribute is not a criterion of servitude in the strict sense, it still adds to it in Tyrtaeus the same two elements which are in Pausanias: first, the language of servile relations, 'masters' (*desposunoi* in the first passage, *despotai* in the second); second, the obligation of mourning. The significance of this obligation is not easy to grasp, particularly as to how it relates to the participation in royal mourning which, according to Herodotus, was imposed on the Helots (only of Laconia, probably). I would assert that Tyrtaeus, like Pausanias, must have seen in this a characteristic of slavery: the word *despotai* here carries the meaning. Tyrtaeus too, therefore, saw the

subjugation of the Messenians as slavery: but was this literal or metaphorical? If it was slavery, its harshness, as Oliva has noted,²⁰ was not excessive and hardly merits Pausanias' use of the phrase 'excessively inflicted' (*hybrizon*); it was not as harsh as the future conjured up by Euphaes at 4.7.10.

I think, therefore, that Tyrtaeus' poetry does indeed refer to the Messenians, but that the status which it describes is not Helotism; moreover, nothing proves that the latter existed at this period.²¹

Thomas Figueira tried to reinforce the notion of Helotism as a status which was favourable in economic terms by showing, on the basis of the figures (which more or less tally) provided by Plutarch and Dicaearchus for a Spartiate's monthly contributions to his *syssition*, that the institution of communal meals operated as a system for redistributing food to the Helots.²² He was struck by the high level of these contributions in kind, in relation both to what we know of Greek norms and to what we can suppose to be the amount consumed by a population living in a traditional economy. From this he deduced that the surplus served in the main to feed Helots who were present at the *syssition*. We might, of course, wonder who these Helots were, because the texts only speak of an occasional presence without any real link with food (as Figueira is aware).

These figures require a different interpretation. Thucydides (4.16.1) transmits the amount of the food rations received by the Spartiates and their Helots blockaded on Sphacteria in 425: two Attic quarts of barley meal, one pint of wine for the Spartiates, with half for the Helots. These rations are substantial, especially for virtual prisoners. Now there can be no question here of any sort of redistribution. The rations correspond to 1.25 *medimnoi* of barley meal and 5 *choes* of wines per month for the citizens, and 0.625 *medimnoi* of barley meal and 2.5 *choes* of wine for the servants.

We will return later on (Ducat, *Hilotes*, 120) to the servants' rations, but let us now consider those of the citizens. At the *syssition* the Spartiate brought each month 1.5 *medimnoi* of barley meal, that is only 0.25 *medimnos* (20 per cent) more than the 'siege' ration. If, therefore, anything can be regarded as being the object of a redistribution, it is this 0.25 *medimnos* per citizen per month; for a dining group of fifteen members, that makes 3.75 *medimnoi* per month, which is the 'siege' ration of precisely six Helots. Were these the people who prepared and served the meals? I cannot say. Nevertheless, such a redistribution, if indeed that really was what was involved (which is doubtful), had no real economic significance. In the Classical period, it would have affected 2,000 Helots at the very most, and these, being household servants, would in any case have had to be fed. At the end of the day, the commodity which, on this interpretation, could be considered as available for redistribution is wine, for which the normal ration was clearly more than double the 'siege' ration.

Hence, we know nothing about the economic forms of dependence of Helots; no Archaic or Classical source speaks of it. All that one can be

confident about is distinguishing a certain 'independence', if not in the organization of work at least in the style of life. At all events, the rural Helots could not help living separately from their masters who normally lived at Sparta. Some indications confirm that they lived separately, without allowing us to say whether their habitations took the form of scattered farms, of groups of houses which brought together, for example, all the Helots from the same estate, or of actual villages. Thus Livy (34.27.9) calls them 'inhabitants of estates' (*castellani*), and a 'rural people' (*agreste genus*), terms which are as appropriate for large farms as for villages. Diodorus (12.67.4) implies an individual dwelling, but this hardly gets us any further. As for the Helots' *poleis*, of which Plutarch speaks at *Cimon* 16.7, were they villages? Basically the word does not have this meaning.

The most useful text is Strabo 8.5.4, 'assigning them certain dwellings and individual tasks', which at first seems so vague and obscure that no definite translation should be proposed before it has been discussed in detail. Things start to become clearer when one also examines the main clause which immediately precedes these words: 'For the Spartans owned them as slaves who were, in a certain sense, public' (see Ducat, *Hilotes*, 23–4), and notice the opposition of public (*demosious*) and private (*idias*) which structures the sentence. The participle clause explains the modification which 'in a certain sense' (*tropon tina*) introduces: it is in contrast to the principal clause, as can be expressed in the translation by an adversative ('but', 'although' ...). For Strabo the Helots were public slaves in one way, but the aspects of their condition considered next had a 'private' aspect. This structure suggests that 'individual' (*idias*) be regarded as common to both nouns in the participial phrase.

After the structure, the words. 'Dwellings' (*katoikiai*) denotes what the masters assigned (*apodeixantes*) to the Helots: they were 'lodged'. What image are we to draw from this? Vocabulary of this sort was used in Egypt, though there the meaning of *katoikia* was completely different and the word we must invoke is *epoikia*, the term used for the lodgings on the estate itself for certain types of agricultural workers who were not slaves/²³ Does the qualification 'certain' (*tinas*) denote a divergence from the precise, technical meaning of *katoikiai*? But, in what way? Or, if this word has only a vague meaning, did Strabo intend to indicate by it that these are 'sorts of dwellings' – temporary, wretched shelters rather than genuine residences?

The term 'tasks' (*leitourgiai*) raises as many questions. Did Strabo want to underline the 'compulsory' nature of Helots' work, which resulted from the 'contract of slavery' (see Ducat, *Hilotes*, 72), and which was already suggested by 'assigning' (*apodeixantes*)? Egypt, once again, might come to mind with its corvée for maintaining dykes and canals, but *leitourgia* did not designate that. The Egyptian route appears to be a dead end, and the key words probably have a vague and non-technical sense. The proposed translation would thus be 'whilst assigning certain individual dwellings and particular tasks to them'.

There remains the question of what 'particular tasks' means: particular to the Helots? Did Strabo think that the latter worked in the main for themselves and their families, while paying a small amount of farm rent? I think not, as the text presents the situation from the perspective of the masters: they are the subjects of the verbs 'owned' (*eichon*) and 'assigning' (*apodeixantes*). 'Particular' means that every Helot worked for the benefit of a person who was his master. It seems that here Strabo was trying to reconcile the contradictory pieces of information which he had on Helotism: communal ownership of the slaves, but private possession or assignation of land.

Perhaps in this context we can find a meaning for the mysterious definition at Hesychius, M.1626 (ed. Latte, II. 676), 'monomoittoi leaders of Helots' (*monomoiton Heilonton archontes*), which Wilamowitz sagely corrected to 'mnoionomoi: leaders of the Helots' (*mnoionomoi: ton Heilonton archontes*).²⁴ Wilamowitz regarded *mnoionomoi* as a Cretan term, because the word *mnoia* is only to be found on Crete. Gschnitzer replied that it could only be Laconian because everywhere else, with the exception of Sparta, slaves were not only not Helots but also could not have been called Helots; the term *mnoia*, derived from the Homeric *dmos*, may have been more widespread than we might think in ancient times, and may have survived at Sparta in this single word collected by Hesychius.²⁵ What can these *mnoionomoi* 'leaders of Helots' be? One possibility is a sort of steward who was given responsibility for managing the estate and for organizing there the work of the *mnoia* (on the meaning of this word, see the poem of Hybrias discussed at Ducat, *Hilotes*, p. 74) during the regular absence of the master. One could also imagine something a little different: customary leaders of the same *mnoia*, which would suggest a kind of recognition, on the part of the masters, of the Helot community which lived on the estate. This community, 'the Helots who lived on so-and-so's estate', seems at any rate to have constituted the basic unit of the Helot population.

All of this is very tenuous, but constructs, in somewhat confused fashion, the picture of a lifestyle with some independence, which would explain why the Helots were presented as a 'people', to some extent juxtaposed to the citizens of Sparta within the state and leading parallel lives; moreover, this is the normal result of self-reproduction in a slave system. We do not know enough about this to say what economic obligations they were restricted to. The payment of fixed dues is entirely possible; like the assignation of an independent habitation, it would bring the Helots close to African 'cabin' slaves who lived in a hut separately from their masters.²⁶ But this *apophora* was certainly not as advantageous as that which Plutarch describes. It should not be seen as a civic tax, but as a produce tax which applied to each estate and which was calculated so as to bring in as much as possible for the master. Some Helots did manage to amass enough money to buy their freedom (5 *mnae* per head in 223), but this was also the case with numerous bought slaves in all parts of the Greek world.²⁷ All the same, the social and economic condition of Helots clearly seems more favourable than the total exploitation²⁸ which

characterized, with some exceptions, the category of bought slaves. Helots certainly had a family life and reproduced normally, since we never hear of a manpower shortage (*oliganthropia*) with regard to Helots.²⁹ This suggests that the portion which they retained from the fruits of their labour was sufficient for feeding their offspring until it became productive. The opportunity to reproduce, which in our view is the great difference between the two forms of slavery, has therefore an economic significance too. That said, Strabo's phrase leaves an impression which is clearly less idyllic than Plutarch's description, in so far as the mention in the former of the dwellings and the 'imposed' tasks almost suggest the work camp.

† First published as *Les Hilotes*, Ch. 6 (*Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique*, Suppl. 2.0), Paris, 1990. Published in English by permission of the French School in Athens, and of the author.

¹ P. Cartledge, *Agesilaos and the Crisis of Sparta* (London, 1987), 172.

² On domestic Helots, cf. P. Oliva, *Sparta and her Social Problems* (Amsterdam, 1971), 172.

³ On the *mothones* and *mothakes*, see Ducat, *Hilotes*, 166–8. On this role the clearest texts are the *scholia* to Aristophanes and the *Lexica* of Hesychius and Harpocration.

⁴ He repeats this injunction for his ideal city (*Laws* 6, 763a).

⁵ 'Mothakes, Neodamodeis, Brasideioi', in *Schiavitù, Manomissione e classi dipendenti nel mondo antico* (conference at Bressanone, 25–7 November 1976) (Università degli studi di Padova, Pubblicazioni del Istituto di Storia Antica 13, Padua, 1979) 24 n. 40 *bis*.

⁶ Heracleides, fr. 9 (Dilts); *Suda*, s.v. Alkman.

⁷ *Suda*, s.v. Philoxenos.

⁸ Lyc. 12.13; *Inst. Lac.* 2 (= 236f); cf. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 5.98.

⁹ For the context, see Ducat, *Hilotes*, 53. I do not know whether we should interpret in the same way Herodian's comment, 'The Spartans call all slaves Helots' (ed. Lentz, I, p. 244.20–1). This might seem to be meant to assert that the Spartiates indiscriminately called Helots both those who really were Helots and other sorts of slaves (this would contribute to the evidence on the name 'Helot'); but to me it seems more likely that it alludes to the fact that the Messenians also had this name (this would contribute to the evidence on 'Helots and Messenians').

¹⁰ Among modern scholars the responses to this are contradictory, cf. A. Toynbee, *Some Problems of Greek History* (Oxford, 1969), 198. D. Lotze, *Μεταξύ ἐλευθέρων και δούλων. Studien zur Rechtstellung unfreier Landbevölkerungen bis zum 4. Jh. v. Chr.* (Berlin, 1959), who discusses this issue at 38–9, did not believe that there were any because of the absence of a monetary system (which is a fairly weak argument); Oliva, *Sparta*, 172–3, considers their existence probable after 404.

¹¹ I translate this expression in the same way as R. Flacelière, E. Chambry and M. Jumeaux (in Plutarch, *Vies* I [Budé, Paris, 1957]; cf. also A. Jardé, *Les Céréales dans l'antiquité grecque, I. La production* [Paris, 1925], 111 n. 3), because this seems to me the most natural meaning in the context and because the income described at 8.7 has already been called *apophora*; but *eiremenos*, the word translated as 'aforementioned', can also mean 'agreed' or 'fixed', as the 'fixed tribute' (*phoros eiremenos*) at Pausanias 4.14.4 indicates (discussed below). But, even though this is the case, Plutarch can only be dealing with the same *apophora* at the two places.

¹² There is a strange translation in H. Jeanmaire, *Couroi et Courètes: Essai sur l'éducation spartiate et sur les rites d'adolescence dans l'antiquité grecque* (Lille, 1939), 486: 'The territory was given to the Helots in lots (*moirai*) to which they were tethered.' This oddity is a result of his 'feudal' interpretation of Helotism.

¹³ G. E. R. Morrow, *Plato's Law of Slavery* (Urbana, IL, 1939), 19–20; H. Klees, *Herren und Sklaven* (Wiesbaden, 1975), 144–5.

¹⁴ Classical Athens: E. Perotti, 'Esclaves Χωριζ, δικούντες, *Colloque 1972. sur l'esclavage* (Paris, 1974), 47–56, especially n. 14. Egypt: I. Biezunska-Malowist, 'Les esclavages payant l'*apophora* dans l'Égypte gréco-romaine', *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 15 (Wrocław, 1965), 65–72; *L'esclavage dans l'Égypte gréco-romaine, I. Période ptolémaïque* (1974) 111–12.; II, *Période romaine* (Wrocław, 1977), 106–7.

¹⁵ Andocides, *de mysteriis* 2.8.

¹⁶ On these problems there is a summary of the hypotheses in Oliva, *Sparta*, 108–12; C. Prato, *Tyrtaeus* (Rome, 1968), 78–9.

¹⁷ K. M. T. Chrimes, *Ancient Sparta: A Re-examination of the Evidence* (Manchester, 1952), 290.

¹⁸ See Ducat, *Hilotes*, 138–40.

¹⁹ See Ducat, *Hilotes*, Ch. 2, 23 n. 9.

²⁰ *Sparta*, 110.

²¹ I certainly think that if the word *Helot* had appeared anywhere in Tyrtaeus, ancient authors, who were very curious about the origins of the status, would have transmitted this passage to us. It is possible that the *Gymnetes*, whom the poet addresses in fr. 8 (line 35) were not *Helots* (there are strong objections to this), but, according to one feasible hypothesis, citizens of secondary status who would later become *Helots*: see the discussion in F. Kiechle, *Lakonien und Sparta* (Munich, 1963), 192–3, and cf. J. F. Lazenby, *The Spartan Army* (Warminster, 1985), 188 n. 46. In the text of the manuscripts, a passage from Pausanias (4.16.6) states that Tyrtaeus incorporated *Helots* into the Spartan army, in which case Pausanias would be implicitly referring to an indication provided by Tyrtaeus, thereby demonstrating the presence of *Helots* in his poetry. But, if we accept a correction, a very small one moreover which, as will be argued later (Ducat, *Hilotes*, 170), seems essential, the text simply states that Tyrtaeus urged the *Spartiates* to fight, which is certain; it is the *Spartiates* themselves who organized the recruitment of *Helots*. In this case, no mention of the *Helots* in the work of the poet is implied; rather, it came from a different source.

²² ‘Mess Contributions and Subsistence at Sparta’, *TAPA* 114, 1984, 87–109.

²³ M. Lewuillon-Blume, *Problèmes de la terre en Égypte romaine: les epoikiotai* *Chronique d'Égypte* 1982, 340–7.

²⁴ *Hermes* 59, 1924, 273; J. C. F. Manso, *Sparta*, 1, 2, 1800, 140, had already drawn attention to this definition.

²⁵ F. Gschnitzer, *Studien zur griechischen Terminologie der Sklaverei II* (Wiesbaden, 1976), 81 with n. 117.

²⁶ Cl. Meillassoux, *Anthropologie de l'esclavage, le ventre de fer et d'argent* (Paris, 1986), 118–19.

²⁷ Plutarch, *Cleomenes* 23.1. From the figures collected by W. L. Westermann, *The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society, 40; Philadelphia, 1955), it is clear that 5 *mnai* was a perfectly normal price for manumission in the third century (cf. L. J. Piper, ‘Spartan *Helots* in the Hellenistic Age’, *Ancient Society* 15–17, 1984–6, 80–1 n. 37). On this passage of Plutarch, cf. Ducat, *Hilotes*, 160 n. 20 (G. Marasco, *Commento alle biografie plutarchee di Agide e di Cleomene* [Rome, 1981], 527–30, adds nothing to his article of 1979); but it has to be admitted that the size of this buy-out poses serious problems, given the low level of monetary circulation in Laconia at this period.

²⁸ Cl. Meillassoux, *Anthropologie*, 270–2, describes it as ‘totalitarian’.

²⁹ On the contrary, we might suppose that, according to the saying which Plutarch reports (*Cleomenes* 18.3), in about 240 certain Spartans considered the *Helots* to be too numerous (which would correspond to their ‘prosperity’), but there is no evidence to confirm that the 50,000 taken as slaves by the Aetolians were *Helots*. On this passage, see the discussion in G. Marasco, *Commento*, 495–7 (but noting that Polybius 4.34.9 attaches the feminine definite article *tas*, rather than the masculine *tous*, to *periokoi*: as a result he seems to be alluding to a political supremacy over the perioikic *poleis*). On the fact that there was no shortage of *Helots*, see also R. J. A. Talbert, ‘The Role of the *Helots* in the Class Struggle at Sparta’, *Historia* 38, 1989, 22–40, at 23.

PART V

Sparta and the Outside World

Introduction

The two chapters in this part consider the mechanics of Sparta's involvement in the wider Greek world. The first is an extract from de Ste Croix's investigation of the Peloponnesian League which deals with the origins of the League. Here de Ste Croix identifies concern for control over Messenia as an important factor, and considers how Sparta maintained authority over her allies through providing protection from other powerful neighbours such as Argos, manipulation of mythical links, and a willingness to interfere in an ally's internal affairs to defend the interests of its friends.¹ In the second Cartledge succinctly summarises debate about the nature of the Peloponnesian League to show how Sparta managed to dominate its allies; this presentation naturally complements that of de Ste Croix since it follows the line of his longer discussion in *Origins of the Peloponnesian War* (Ch. IV.iv, pp. 101–24).

Both de Ste Croix and Cartledge regard Sparta as a state whose involvement in external affairs was severely affected by the helot factor, but, in keeping with the preservation of an open mind about helots, it is also necessary to consider whether Sparta's reputation as isolationist is justified. As with the helots, one source of difficulty is a generalisation offered by Thucydides, his famous comment that the Spartans were 'not quick to enter upon wars unless compelled to do so' (1.118.2).² This observation may have been true for the period when Thucydides was best informed, the generation or so after the great earthquake of 465 and the consequent Messenian war, but this could be seen as an exception sandwiched between an expansionist Sparta that was familiar to both Herodotus and Xenophon.

One line of approach has already been demonstrated in Parker's contribution on religion (Chapter 8 above) where he questions the modern tendency to sceptical interpretations of the succession of religious reasons adduced by Sparta for not becoming involved in specific foreign ventures:³ these should not be seen as excuses to conceal a structural reluctance. Another approach is foreshadowed in an important article by Paul Cartledge on Sparta's long-standing interest in Samos.⁴ Although Cartledge presents this as a special case, an exception to the rule of lack of interest in external possibilities, he usefully analyses how links could be forged between aristocrats by individual relations of friendship (*xenia*) or more official duties of representing outside interests (*proxenia*).⁵ But it is possible that Samos is special because of the quantity of information which Herodotus, in particular, preserves,⁶ and such links can suggest how Spartans may have attempted to

develop their interests in other areas.⁷ Andrewes, while doubting whether Sparta as a state was regularly imperialist, recognised the importance of the ambitions of particular individuals in determining the actions of the *polis* and identified a long-standing concern with the affairs of central Greece as proof of a desire to expand.⁸ Powell categorised Sparta as opportunistic in its relations with Athens even during the period to which Thucydides' judgement would most directly apply.⁹ A wider Spartan interest in the outside world is suggested by Malkin's challenging study of mythical connections between Sparta and Heracleia Trachinia in central Greece, Melos and Thera in the central Aegean, Cnidus in south-west Asia Minor, western Crete, Cyrenaica in north Africa, western Sicily, and Locri, Croton and the region of Taras in south Italy.¹⁰ Even if not all the links are equally conclusive, inevitably because the myths are imprecise or the evidence incomplete, a picture emerges of an outward-looking Sparta whose leaders might create stories to promote their ambitions and to whom outsiders might turn for support with some hope of success, especially if a story could be created to justify this.¹¹ All this helps to explain how it was that Sparta in the early fourth century, the best-documented period of its history, was so enthusiastic about intervening in the wider Greek world: this was not a new departure but the continuation of deep-seated ambitions. But, at the same time, we need to remember the insights of de Ste Croix and Cartledge into the functioning of the Peloponnesian League in order to understand the resources on which Sparta could call, as well as the limitations to their exploitation.

¹ Useful further discussion in Osborne, *Greece*, 287–91.

² For this translation and discussion, see de Ste Croix, *Origins*, 94–5.

³ Cf. also Lazenby, *Army*, 36–7.

⁴ Cartledge, 'Samos'.

⁵ For full discussion of these relationships, see Herman, *Friendship*, esp. 130–56.

⁶ On this see B. M. Mitchell, 'Herodotus and Samos' *JHS* 95, 1975, 75–91

⁷ Cf. Mitchell, *Greeks*, Ch. 4 for a collection of evidence on Spartans with connections in other parts of the Greek world.

⁸ Andrewes, 'Imperialism'.

⁹ *Athens*, 118–28; also 'Athens' Difficulty, Sparta's Opportunity: Causation and the Peloponnesian War', *L'Antiquité classique* 49, 1980, 87–114. See, too, Talbert, 'Role', and Whitby, 'Images' 107–11.

¹⁰ Malkin, *Myth*.

¹¹ One of the problems for Aristagoras of Miletus, whose appeal for Spartan help in the Ionian Revolt (Herodotus 5.49–51) is a much-cited example of Spartan reluctance to embrace foreign commitments, was perhaps the lack of a good mythical-historical link between Dorian Sparta and Ionian Miletus. The decisive factor, that the Persian capital Susa lay three months' journey from the Mediterranean, demonstrates not so much a lack of interest at Sparta in foreign adventures as a recognition of military practicalities.

12 *Sparta's 'Foreign Policy'*[†]

G. E. M. DE STE CROIX

Sparta's precarious position as the mistress of the Helots forced her to take special precautions to prevent any hostile power from invading her territory and inducing the Helots to rise, as the Messenian ones anyway were always ready to do. We have already noticed that on the very first occasion on which a large hostile army did penetrate deeply into Laconia and Messenia, in 370/69, the Messenians threw off the Spartan yoke for ever. Once they had revolted, and consolidated their position, a reconquest was out of the question, even when outside help was no longer available to the Messenians: the main reason for this was the great mountain barrier between the two countries, as anyone who has crossed the formidable Taygetus range will easily realise. (The foundation of the great fortified city of Megalopolis, close to the turning-point of the easiest route from Sparta into the upper Messenian plain, created an additional hazard.) That Sparta had ever been able to conquer Messenia in the first place, and crush the first revolt in the seventh century, is remarkable enough. The feat could not now be repeated.

After their conquest of Messenia the Spartans seem at first to have thought they could extend their conquests, with annexation on the Messenian pattern, and acquire further Helots; but about the middle of the sixth century they decided to be content with a much more modest programme, and they began instead to build up the system of military alliances which we know as 'the Peloponnesian League'.¹ We have very little information about the growth of the League, after what was perhaps the first episode, involving Tegea. This was associated with the bringing to Sparta of the bones of Orestes, a talisman the significance of which has often been noticed:² Sparta was now ceasing to regard herself as a purely Dorian power³ and was claiming to be heir to the 'Achaean' hegemony of Agamemnon, whose tomb was now conveniently located at Amyclae, a little south of Sparta, and whose son Orestes was said to have succeeded his uncle Menelaus as Sparta's king. With the co-operation of the Delphic Oracle (Hdt. I 66-7) and the poet Stesichorus⁴ (not to mention Pindar in the fifth century),⁵ the new policy was an unqualified success. What is very probably a fragment of the treaty now⁶ concluded between Sparta and Tegea, recorded on a stele standing on the bank of the River Alpheius (which is likely to have been the frontier between the two States), has survived in a quotation by Plutarch from Aristotle. This fragment reveals how much the suppression of the Messenians was still uppermost in the minds of the Spartans, for in it the Tegeates swore 'to expel the Messenians from their country and not to make them citizens'.⁷ Later treaties between Sparta and her

allies probably contained some such clause as the one we find in the Spartan–Athenian alliance of 421, where the Athenians promise to help Sparta put down ‘slave’ revolts (Thuc. V 23.3).

Although the growth of Sparta’s alliance cannot be traced stage by stage, we know that by the early 540s at the latest it included a large part of the Peloponnese (virtually all of it, indeed, apart from Argos and the Achaean cities⁸ along the southern shore of the Corinthian Gulf), and made Sparta already the strongest power in Greece. The evidence for this is provided by Herodotus, who explains that Croesus sent to Sparta to make an alliance because she was the most powerful of the Greek states (I 56.1–2; 59.1; 65.1; 69.1–2), and speaks of ‘most of the Peloponnese’ as ‘having been ‘*made subject* (*katestrammenē*) by the Spartans’ (68.6). In the fifth and fourth centuries, in theory, Sparta’s allies were ‘free and autonomous’. We shall see in Part iv of this Chapter [*Origins*, 101–24], dealing with the structure of the Peloponnesian League, why Herodotus spoke of the allies as having been ‘subjected’ to Sparta in the sixth century.

This Spartan alliance, evolving into ‘the Peloponnesian League’,⁹ was the strongest force in Greek politics for two centuries, until it finally disintegrated in the mid-360s.¹⁰ Thucydides (I 141.6) makes Pericles pay it a striking tribute in 432: although he depreciates its organisation (rather unfairly), he admits that ‘in a single battle the Peloponnesians and their allies are capable of holding their own against all the Greeks’. The League gave Sparta the security she needed. As long as it held together, Sparta had no need to fear Helot revolts, for she would be able to call upon her allies to help crush them.

In order to hold her alliance together, Sparta on her side had to defend her allies from outside attack, whether from Argos or from beyond the Peloponnese, give them ‘freedom and autonomy’ (in a very special sense, as we shall see in a moment), and attach them to herself by making them acquiesce in their submission to her hegemony. If she broke her treaty obligations, the allies concerned, in theory, would automatically be released from theirs, although of course in practice they might not dare to repudiate their treaties and thus ‘revolt’ from Sparta: this would depend on their strength relative to Sparta’s and the external situation at the time. In general, Sparta’s allies (or rather, their ‘governments’)¹¹ did acquiesce in the existence of the Peloponnesian League, which, unlike the Delian League of which Athens was hegemon, placed no financial or military obligations upon the allies at all except when a League war was actually in progress. One can see why Megara or Aegina or even Corinth, exposed to attack from outside, or the small towns of the Argolid, in fear of Argive domination, might find League membership a useful protection. But why should the Arcadian towns, for example, submit indefinitely to Spartan hegemony?

Sparta found the right answer, from her own point of view: in a world where democracy was slowly gaining ground, she would support ‘ancestral’ oligarchies, and thus enlist the enthusiastic cooperation of the propertied

classes in whose hands power would in this way be permanently retained. Only at Mantinea¹² and probably Elis¹³ did democracies exist in the fifth century in the area controlled by Sparta, as far as we know. In general oligarchies 'suited to Sparta's interests' were the rule: Thucydides is most explicit about this.¹⁴ In the fifth century they may not have needed a great deal of propping up by Sparta, and many of them were probably not very narrowly based: they may have extended at their widest to the whole hoplite class.¹⁵ But in the fourth they seem to have become more of an anachronism than ever, and after the battle of Leuctra in 371 there was a widespread expulsion of Laconisers.¹⁶

This policy involved interference with 'freedom and autonomy' on a large scale,¹⁷ but it was a type of interference which was much less visible than, for example, the Athenian kind. Gomme,¹⁸ in a useful brief discussion of the meaning of *autonomia*, defines it as 'the freedom of a state to conduct its own internal affairs, that is, to choose and control its own magistrates, and to try its own citizens', and he adds that 'if the state was a member of a league (or of a federation), its freedom in foreign relations was necessarily limited by that membership; if it was not free to leave the league, and if a garrison or an expeditionary force from another state would forcibly prevent its leaving, that limited still further its *eleutheria* ['freedom'], but not, properly speaking, its *autonomia*. Certainly Athens frequently interfered with her allies' freedom and autonomy in all these ways, Sparta on few specific occasions (as far as we know) until she began sending out harmosts to be more than purely military commanders (from 423 onwards),¹⁹ although Sparta's allies were not free to leave her League, any more than Athens' allies were allowed to do so: to abandon the alliance of Sparta or of Athens was to 'revolt'.

Athens did far more than Sparta in the way of visible, day-to-day interference with her allies' freedom and autonomy: the installation of supervisory magistrates and of garrisons, limitation of independent jurisdiction, and so on. But, as I have already pointed out elsewhere,²⁰ a definition, *autonomia* such as Gomme's omits an essential element: the right of a city to choose, alter and administer its own laws, above all its own political constitution. I would suggest that this was really by far the most important ingredient, and that Sparta infringed the autonomy of most of her allies at least as seriously as Athens did, by maintaining in them oligarchies which would otherwise have tended to disappear. Experience of modern satellite States in both the great camps has taught us that if a Great Power can maintain a sufficiently complaisant government in a satellite State (however dissatisfied many of its population may be with their subservient position), open coercion of that State may never be necessary unless there is a full-scale revolution. Two out of many examples of Spartan 'satellite' rulers zealously serving their protectors must suffice. When Sparta in 385 had destroyed the walls of Mantinea and broken the city up into its four original constituent villages, the propertied class of landowners were delighted, as they were now

under an 'aristocracy' and no longer troubled by 'burdensome demagogues'; and they 'came for military service with the Spartans from their villages far more enthusiastically than when they were under a democracy' (Xen., *Hell.* V ii.7). So too Leontiadēs the Theban and his party, when they betrayed the Cadmeia to the Spartans in 382 and were set up as a small governing oligarchy, 'gave the Spartans even more service than was demanded of them' (ii.36).

† Reprinted by permission of the author from *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, London: Duckworth, 1972.

¹ Many problems remain which are not sufficiently relevant to be discussed here. Hdt. I 82–3 seems to date the war with Argos for the possession of Thyreatis at the time of the fall of Sardis (c. 547); some believe that Cythera and other (possibly Argive) territory was acquired by Sparta at the same time (see e.g. G. L. Huxley, *Early Sparta* [London, 1962,] 70–1). The Sciritis may also have been acquired about now, as believed by Moretti [in *Ricerche sulle leghe greche*, Rome, 1962, 45]; others would give a much earlier date, well inside the eighth century (e.g. Huxley, *op. cit.* 22). Cf. also T. Kelly, in [*American Historical Review*] 75 (1970), at pp. 976–84.

² The main source is Hdt. I 65–8. (Cf. Paus. VII i.8: the bones of Orestes' son Teisamenus, brought from Achaean Helike, probably not much later. See D. M. Leahy, 'The Bones of Teisamenus', in *Historia* 4 [1955] 26–38.) There is a very stimulating account of this period in [W. G. Forrest, *A History of Sparta 950–192 BC*, London, 1968,] 73–6, 79–83; but the minor Arcadian hero Orestes (p. 74) is a red herring which should not be dragged in.

³ Note esp. the reply of King Cleomenes I to the priestess of Athena at Athens: 'I am not a Dorian but an Achaean' (Hdt. V 72.3). On the significance of his brother's name, Dorieus, see [Forrest, *Sparta*, 82–3: now add R. Parker, 'Cleomenes on the Acropolis', *An Inaugural Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 12 May 1997*, Oxford, 1998, 4–5].

⁴ See C. M. Bowra, in *CQ* 28 (1934) 115–19; M. L. West, in *ZPE* 4 (1969), at p. 148.

⁵ See Pind., *Pyth.* XI 16, 31–2; *Nem.* XI 33–4.

⁶ Other dates have been proposed: e.g. about the middle of the fifth century, by [G. Busolt and H. Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde*, Munich, 1920–26,] II 1320 and n. 3; and 464 or a little later, by Moretti, [*Ricerche*] 46–9. But the mid-sixth century seems most likely. And see Wade-Gery, in [E. Badian (ed.), *Ancient Society and Institutions: Studies Presented to Victor Ehrenberg on his 75th birthday*, Oxford, 1966,] 297–8, 302.

⁷ Arist., fr. 592, *ap. Plut.*, [*Greek Questions* 5 = *Mor.* 292b; cf. *Roman Questions* 52 = *Mor.* 277bc; see H. Bengtson (ed.), *Die Verträge der griechisch-römischen Welt von 700 bis 338 v. Chr.* = *Die Staatsverträge des Altertums* II, Munich, 1962, 112]. Aristotle seems to have misunderstood the archaic language, the right interpretation of which is surely that given by Jacoby, in *CQ* 38 (1944) 15–16 = [*Abhandlungen zur griechischen Geschichtsschreibung*, ed. H. Bloch, London, 1956,] 342–3.

⁸ These were as yet unimportant: this and their isolated geographical position made them not worth subduing.

⁹ See Part iv of this Chapter [*Origins*, 102–5] for an answer to the question why it is necessary to distinguish, within the 'Spartan alliance' as a whole, an inner circle of allies which, from c. 505–1 or rather later, may be given the name, 'the Peloponnesian League'.

¹⁰ The reluctant defection of the Corinthians and others in 366/5 (Xen., *Hell.* VII iv.7–9; cf. Isoc. VI 11–13) marks the real end of the League. Cf. the totally different situation in 362: Xen., *Hell.* VII v.5.1–3.

¹¹ Cf. Chapter III, Part I [*Origins*, 64], *ad init.*

¹² Thuc. V 29.1; and see Hdt. IX 77.1–2; Strabo VIII iii.2, p. 337; Arist., *Pol.* VI 4, 1318^b 25–7; Xen., *Hell.* V ii.1–7.

¹³ See the Eleian decrees, probably of the fifth century, in [G. F. Hill, *Sources for Greek History between the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars*, Oxford, 1951,] 325 (B 124); and see Hdt. IX 77.3; Strabo, *loc. cit.* In n. 12; Diod. XI 54.1; cf. Paus. X ix.5; Arist., *Pol.* V 6, 1306^a 12–19.

¹⁴ See Thuc. I 19 and 144.2 [*epitedeios*, 'suitably']; 76.1 [*ophelimon*, 'useful']; and cf. the use of [*epitedeios*, 'suitable'], in such passages as V 76.2; 81.2; 82.1.

¹⁵ See Chapter I, Part iii [*Origins*, 35], n. 65.

¹⁶ Diod. XV 40 (misdated to 375/4); cf. 5.1–3; Dem. XVIII 18; Polyb. IV xxvii.5–7, etc.

¹⁷ See [G. E. M. de Ste Croix, 'The Character of the Athenian Empire', *Historia* 3, 1954/5, 1–41, at] 20–1 (with its n. 5, giving references to Sparta's main interventions in favour of oligarchs in the fifth and fourth centuries). On the meaning of *autonomia*, see esp. [E. J. Bickerman, 'AUTONOMIA: Sur un

passage de Thucydide (I, 144, 2)', *RIDA* 5, 1958, 313–44].

¹⁸ [A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, 5 vols, Oxford, 1945–81, I 384–5; cf. Bickerman, 'AUTONOMIA'.]

¹⁹ Thuc. IV 132.3. On the harmosts, see G. Bockisch, 'Ἀρμοσται (431–387)', in *Klio* 46 (1965) 129–239; [H. W. Parke, 'The Development of the Second Spartan Empire', *JHS* 50, 1920, 37–79; U. Kahrstedt, *Griechisches Staatsrecht*, I. *Sparta und seine Symmachie*, Göttingen, 1922,] 122, 115–16, 229–31.

²⁰ de Ste Croix, 'The Character', 20–1; cf. Bickerman, 'AUTONOMIA'.

13 *The Origins and Organisation of the Peloponnesian League†*

PAUL CARTLEDGE

The origins of the Peloponnesian League (soundly discussed by Wickert 1961; less satisfactorily by Moretti 1962, 5–95, esp. 76–81) are mostly lost in the mists of Herodotean logography. For although they fall squarely within the period c.550–479 chosen for special enquiry (*historiê*) by the Father of History, Herodotus was not the historian to be slowed down by diplomatic and constitutional niceties, and there is no documentary evidence certainly datable before 479 to put flesh on his narrative skeleton. The single pre-Hellenistic Spartan treaty of alliance that has been preserved on stone, that with the otherwise unknown Aitolian Erxadieis, cannot be unquestionably dated and does not unequivocally fall within the admittedly rather loose framework of the Peloponnesian League constitution (Peek 1974 and Gschnitzer 1978 agree on a date of c. 500–475, but see Cartledge 1976, 1978; Kelly 1978). It is indeed possible to query whether the League ever had anything that might usefully be called a ‘constitution’, in this or any period down to its effective dissolution in the mid-360s. But my own view is that its rudimentary constitutional structure did at least make it a *Bündnissystem*, a system of alliance, though not a *Staatenbund* or league (cf. Ste. Croix 1972, 104, 117; Gschnitzer 1978, 33; against those cited in Ste. Croix 1972, 104n.45, to whom add Kelly 1975, 52–69). If the title be conceded, and if we may legitimately draw on Xenophon, who is by far our most prolific source, as well as fifth-century evidence, then the constitution of the Peloponnesian League in 445 may be summarized on the following lines.

The name of the League was ‘The Lakedaimonians (Spartans) and their allies (*summachoi*)’. League members, it seems virtually certain, were allied individually by written treaty to Sparta alone and did not necessarily have any formal ties among themselves. Officially all allies were autonomous, and a clause to that effect may have been routinely inserted in the individual treaties (it does not appear in the Erxadieis treaty, but this is incomplete). That is, they had in theory the right to make their own *nomoi* (positive laws) and so, according to Greek notions of *nomoi*, might choose their form of political constitution and administer legal justice as they wished (Ste. Croix 1972, 98–9). In practice, however, the Spartans were careful to ensure that as a matter of convenience as well as ideology the allied states generally continued to be governed more or less as they were when first received into alliance, by well-disposed oligarchies (Thuc. 1.19, 144.2 are clear statements of this Spartan

principle; cf. 5.31.6). This well illustrates a general rule of Greek interstate relations and vocabulary, that ‘the independence of the “autonomous” states stands always in the shadow of a stronger power’ (Ostwald 1982, 1; following Bickerman 1958, 327–32, 334–7, 343).

The claim of such oligarchies to govern rested in the first instance on their wealth and sometimes too on their supposed aristocratic birth, but ultimately on Spartan support and the threat or promise of Spartan military intervention. Relations with these friendly oligarchies were cemented by personal ties of ritual guest-friendship (*xenia*) involving especially the two Spartan royal houses; and, as with the client-kings of the Roman Empire, the sons of allied oligarchs might be sent to Sparta for a taste of the peculiarly Spartan brand of education discussed in the next chapter [*Agesilaos*, 20–33], 5.3.9) and so become known as *trophimoi xenoi* [‘foreign nurslings/pupils’].¹ It was a short step – and one that notably *Agesilaos* was not afraid to take – from favouring such regimes to intervening militarily in an ally’s internal affairs to impose or prop up a client or puppet oligarchy against the wishes of the majority of its citizens (cf. Ste. Croix 1954/5, 20n.5). Such intervention could be represented as fulfilling the absolute moral obligation of the aristocratic code to help one’s friends (and harm one’s enemies). Less politely put, it was an infringement of an ally’s *autonomia* [control over internal matters] (see further Chapters 11 and 13 [*Agesilaos*, 180–202 and 242–73] on this concept) and a technique of *Realpolitik*.

The allies, as mentioned above, were not necessarily bound formally to each other, and when the League as such was at peace wars between individual member-states were permitted or at least did occur (e.g. Plut. *Cim.* 17.1; Thuc. 4.134.1; contrast 5.4.36–7). But if an ally was attacked by a non-League member, Sparta was bound by the terms of the treaties to give aid ‘with all strength in accordance with her ability’ (*panti sthenei katto dunaton*) and *vice versa* if Sparta was so attacked – something which did not in fact happen on a large scale until 370/69 when the attackers crucially included revolted ex-members of the League (Chapters 12–14) [*Agesilaos*, 203–313]. In the case of aggressive action by the League as a whole, however, the relationship between Sparta and the allies was not one of equality and reciprocity (Ste. Croix 1972, 298–9). For the allies were required to swear to have the same friends and enemies as the Spartans (hence they became *summachoi*, since a *summachia* in its original, full sense was an offensive as well as a defensive alliance), whereas the Spartans did not necessarily or even usually take the reciprocal oath. Moreover, probably from the outset allies had to swear to ‘follow the Spartans whithersoever they might lead’ (e.g. 2.2.20, 4.6.2, 5.3.26, 6.3.8). This clause was a suitable reflection of Sparta’s military preponderance, it is true, but formally it also robbed the allies of their *eleutheria* or freedom to determine their own foreign policy and so converted them into subjects and Sparta into their *hêgemôn* or leader. It was perhaps this *Hegemonieklausel* [clause relating to command] which encouraged Herodotus to describe most of the Peloponnese

from as early as the mid-sixth century as 'already subjugated (*kates-trammenê*)' by Sparta (Hdt. 1.68.6, with Ste. Croix 1972, 108–10).

This glib generalization, however, disguises a process that was by no means automatic. The earliest known alliance, which may have served as a model for the rest, was concluded between Sparta and Tegea around 550 ([Bengston, 1962,] 112). It would at least be symbolically apt if this were indeed the first alliance. For Tegea was the nearest *polis* to Sparta, it was one of the two major states of Arkadia (the other being Mantinea), and Arkadia was the single most vital geographical area of the Peloponnese outside their own home territory with which the Spartans had to deal. By allying with the Tegean oligarchy Sparta sought to prise her neighbour away from the embrace of Argos, Sparta's chief rival for the hegemony of the Peloponnese (e.g. Thuc. 5.40.3); to use Tegean influence and manpower in S.W. Arkadia to contain the ever potentially rebellious Messenian Helots; and to ensure that the obvious overland approach to her home territory was in safe and friendly hands. To make doubly sure of Argive acquiescence, a heavy defeat was inflicted on Argos by Sparta in about 545 and the disputed frontier region of Thyreatis (also known as Kynouria) was annexed to the Spartan *polis*. Within twenty years Sparta was almost certainly allied to Corinth, who controlled the vital Isthmos land-route and had a significant navy (cf. Cartledge 1982, 258 and n.83),² and perhaps soon after to Megara on the far, eastern side of the Isthmos (cf. Legon 1981, 143–5). For even though Corinth and Megara like many neighbouring Greek states were far from always enjoying the best of relations with each other, they also both saw the virtue of an alliance with Sparta that might provide aid against other hostile neighbours such as Argos and Athens besides shoring up their existing oligarchic regimes. Not only was the Isthmos now secure but Argos was hemmed in on the north as well as the south. By 491, it appears (Ste. Croix 1972, 333–5; but see now Figueira 1981), the aristocratic oligarchy of the island state of Aigina was also a Peloponnesian League ally, and Argos had again been soundly trounced, probably in 494. But the Persian invasions of 490 and 480–479 precipitated a generation of Peloponnesian instability for Sparta, fomented latterly by a revived Argos and abetted by an expansionist Athens (Cartledge 1979, ch.II). Stability was only restored – but not entirely satisfactorily and in the event temporarily – by the Peace of 446/5.

So far as the Peloponnesian League's constitution is concerned, a major development had occurred in or around 504. To be more accurate, a Spartan alliance was then transmogrified into something more deserving of the title 'Peloponnesian League'. Henceforth an inner circle of League allies was distinguished from the broader Spartan alliance which also comprised *ad hoc* alliances concluded later by Sparta outside the League framework (Ste. Croix 1972, 102–5; cf. Cargill 1981 for a similar distinction in the fourth century between allies of Athens who were members of the Second Athenian League and allies who were not). For Peloponnesian League members the hegemony-

clause was now so modified that Sparta's decision to commit them to an aggressive war against an external enemy was no longer sufficient for League action. The decision of the Spartan Assembly had first to be ratified by a majority vote of allied representatives or mandated delegates (which they were is not known, but more likely the former) meeting in a Congress summoned by Sparta and usually held in Sparta over which a Spartan chairman presided.

Each ally regardless of size had one vote (among themselves Greek oligarchs could be as fiercely egalitarian as Greek democrats), and majority decisions were binding on the minority unless a dissenting ally could claim a prior religious obligation as a legitimate exemption (below). Should Sparta's decision for war be duly ratified, as in 432, then Sparta as *hêgemôn* levied the League army, herself contributing the commander-in-chief (normally a king) and designating Spartan officers (*xenagoi*) to levy the stipulated amount of allied troops; and it was Sparta who determined when and where the combined force was to muster. In these circumstances Sparta's influence naturally weighed heavily, but the outcome of a Congress was by no means necessarily a pure formality: the first Congress on record (Hdt. 5.91–3) in fact rejected the Spartan proposal in c.504 for war on Athens to reinstate Hippias as tyrant, and this was not the last time that Corinth, exploiting her strategic indispensability, was successfully to lead the allied opposition to Sparta's will. On the other hand, the League's decision-taking machinery ensured that the *hêgemôn* could not be committed against her will to spearheading a foreign policy of which she disapproved (cf. Ste. Croix 1972, 110–12). That permanent advantage to Sparta greatly overbalanced individual setbacks like that of c.504.

The conclusion of Peace by the League, as for instance in 446/5, was similarly subject to a majority vote of an allied Congress, and again the obligation to abide by the majority decision was binding. But in 421 the Corinthians, in a small minority on this occasion, claimed exemption from the League decision to ratify the Peace of Nikias by appealing to what they represented as a universally applicable exemption-clause. An 'impediment of gods or heroes', they alleged (Thuc. 5.30.3), made it impossible for them to swear to observe the Peace because that would mean breaking existing treaties with their allies in northern Greece (even though they were outside the Peloponnesian League). Since treaties, like much other public business in Classical Greece, were ultimately religious in content – in the sense that they were constituted by the oaths sworn in the name of gods or heroes (hence the erection of copies in sanctuaries such as Olympia) – this claim to exemption on the ground of a prior religious obligation was presumably valid (cf. Ste. Croix 1972, 118–20). It has been doubted whether an organization which tolerated so widely-cast an 'escape-clause' could have been effective as a power-unit, but this is to underestimate the Spartans' notorious religiosity (Hodkinson 1983, 273–6) and to overlook the fact that outright secession from the alliance was not permitted. Even if in Corinth's case the alleged impediment was merely a trumped-up excuse for prevarication and disobedience, it was at any rate

nically calculated to undermine Sparta's legitimacy as *hēgēmōn*.

So long as Sparta observed the letter of her individual treaties with her allies and duly sought and received their collective approval of those foreign policies which involved League action, no ally had a strictly legal justification for refusing to 'follow whithersoever Sparta might lead' or to abide by peace-terms ratified by a League Congress – apart perhaps from the 'gods or heroes' exemption. If, nevertheless, an ally failed to fulfill its obligations, whether negatively by for example refusing to contribute its stipulated contingent to a League expedition or positively by, say, allying with a declared enemy of Sparta and the League, that constituted revolt and Sparta was fully justified in coercing the ally without the need to call a League Congress. Cases of genuine dispute, however, might arise when Sparta was either, as in 421, preternaturally weak or, as in 404 and 386, exceptionally strong. Then Sparta might either make unusual concessions to particularly formidable dissident allies (as to the Boiotians in 420 and the Mantineians some time after 418: see Chapters 14 and 13 [*Agesilaos*, 274–313 and 242–73]) or act strictly *ultra vires* in coercing and punishing allies who had in various ways exploited her earlier weakness (as the Eleians in the late 400s, and the Mantineians and Phleisians in the 380s: Chapter 13 [*Agesilaos*, 242–73]). In the grey area between less than one hundred per cent obedience and outright revolt it was relative power rather than narrow legality that determined Sparta's behaviour towards a recalcitrant ally. But that behaviour, as I shall hope to demonstrate, was always conditioned by the maxim *salus patriae, suprema lex*. Sparta's conception of her own best interests, or rather the conception entertained by the group that at any time happened to be dominant within the Spartan political hierarchy, always guided her actions rather than any altruistic or even impersonal considerations of justice or morality. (Not that Sparta was peculiar in this respect, then or now.)

Which brings us naturally to the final aspect of the Peloponnesian League to be considered here. Each individual treaty between Sparta and her Peloponnesian League allies possibly contained, as the separate treaty of defensive alliance with Athens in 421 certainly did (Thuc. 5.23.2), a clause binding the ally to lend Sparta assistance in the event of a revolt by the 'slave class' (*douleia*, used here as the collective noun for *douloi*), that is by the Helots. It was perhaps in fulfilment of this obligation that Mantinea (5.2.3) and Aigina (Thuc. 2.27.2, 4.56.2) had given aid during the great revolt of the 460s (Cartledge 1979, 219–20). At any rate, it would not be at all surprising if some such provision had been inserted in the treaties at an appropriate moment after that revolt had been eventually crushed. But whether they all contained such an explicit provision or this obligation was tacitly subsumed under the 'friends and enemies' clause, it was without question the Helots who provided the link between the Peloponnesian League as the instrument of Spartan power abroad and the League as shield of Sparta's highly vulnerable domestic power-base. For the Helots were both the ultimate foundation of Spartan might, a sort of

earthy caryatid like George Orwell's grimy Wigan coalminers, and Sparta's Achilles heel. 'Most Spartan institutions', as Thucydides (4.80.3) famously put it, 'have always been designed with a view to security against the Helots'.³ The history of Sparta, it is not too much to say, is fundamentally the history of the class struggle between the Spartans and the Helots (cf. Cartledge 1979, ch.10; and see further Chapter 10 [Agesilaos, 160–79]).

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† Reprinted from *Agesilaos* by Paul Cartledge, London: Duckworth, 1987, by permission of the author.

¹ Where no other indication is given such references are to Xenophon's *Hellenika*.

² J.B. Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth* (Oxford, 1984) unfortunately appeared after this book was finished: see my review in *CR* n.s. 35 (1985), 115–17.

³ Or, according to a different interpretation of the Greek word-order: 'So far as the Helots are concerned, most Spartan institutions have always been designed with a view to security.'

PART VI

Spartan Decline

Introduction

The first generation of the fourth century BC witnessed both the peak of Spartan power and its decisive overthrow by the Thebans at Leuctra in 371. Analysts, contemporary as well as later, offered explanations which depended to an extent on the personal biases and theoretical preferences of the individual author.¹ Thus the religious Xenophon, who was favourably disposed towards King Agesilaus, naturally pointed to oath-breaking and other signs of Spartan disregard for the gods, whilst also claiming that the opportunities for personal enrichment on service abroad unbalanced the state in spite of Agesilaus' best efforts. Moral degeneration caused by unfamiliar wealth appealed to a number of writers (not all of them ancient),² who could use the apparent suddenness of Sparta's collapse to bolster wider theses about social change. A potent alternative explanation was provided by Aristotle's identification of manpower shortage, *oliganthropia*, as the key factor (*Politics* 2.6, i270a33), for which support can be derived from analysis of Spartiate numbers at a sequence of battles from Plataea in 479 to Leuctra.³

Cawkwell's contribution in [Chapter 14](#) has the virtue of avoiding the ancient moralising analyses; instead he clearly sets out the evidence for Spartiate numbers, and discusses aspects of Spartan military organisation, before turning to the means employed by Sparta to counteract the drop in citizen numbers and to secure the participation in the state's military endeavours of different elements of the subordinate population. Cawkwell notes the impact of casualties in battle and during the earthquake of 465, but otherwise does not speculate about the cause of the citizen decline. For analysis of this one has to turn to Hodkinson, who has pointed to the long-term consequences of Spartan inheritance practices and marriage strategies for the progressive concentration of property; these would have been further encouraged by the disruption to families in the earthquake and the markedly greater availability of money after the Peloponnesian War.⁴ Cawkwell also takes issue with moralising explanations by pointing out that Spartiates had always had a pronounced mercenary streak – the Spartan reputation for probity and the alleged ban on gold and silver were part of the Spartan mirage. Here too Hodkinson's discussions can usefully be consulted for substantiation and deeper analysis. In particular he plausibly explains the origin of important elements in the Spartan myth, the notions that all Spartiates had once possessed an equal allotment (*kleros*) of land as the foundation for their citizen status, that alienation of this property was only permitted in the fourth

century under an emendation to the Lycurgan constitution, the so-called Rider of Epitadeus, and that a Lycurgan ban on foreign coinage was relaxed after the Peloponnesian War.⁵ Hodkinson suggests that these misrepresentations may have been created by King Pausanias, who, after his exile in 395, composed a pamphlet on Sparta (attested in Strabo 8.5.5; 366c); this probably took issue with the imperialist policies associated with his enemies, Lysander and Agesilaus, and highlighted certain alleged departures from Lycurgan ideals in contemporary Sparta.⁶

For Cawkwell the key factor in Sparta's decline was external, the growing professionalism of warfare in other parts of the Greek world and in particular the brilliance of the generalship of the Theban Epaminondas. At first sight this contrasts markedly with Hodkinson's analysis, which stresses the gradual evolution of Spartan society to produce major differences within the citizen body: the ideal of equality for the *homoioi* was decisively undermined, numerous citizens lost the capacity to pay their contributions to the *syssitia*, and surviving citizens were sharply polarised in terms of wealth, with the elite families constructing substantial patronage networks.⁷ But the respective focus on an external and internal agent for the termination of supremacy can, to an extent, be reconciled through a common emphasis on the inherent conservatism of Sparta. For Cawkwell Sparta lost its military superiority not because of any decline in its own standards but because it did not maintain the lead which its professionalism at war had previously given; when a brilliant commander appeared, the traditional Spartans did not have the capacity to cope. For Hodkinson excessive respect for tradition augmented the impact of the longer-term trends which he identified: when Spartan authorities reacted to the decline in citizen numbers by offering rewards for greater procreation, they were merely ensuring that more families would be unable to sustain their citizen status after inheritance divided the family property unit. Respect for property rights prevented a major redistribution of land which could have returned citizen status to the dispossessed, and respect for the traditional constitution ruled out a radical change to the basic criterion for citizenship, membership of a *syssition*. In contrast to scholars like Finley who have asserted that Spartan society changed substantially in the early fourth century,⁸ Cawkwell and Hodkinson identify underlying continuities, even if the myth or image was being reshaped.

¹ See Hodkinson, 'Society', for general discussion of these ancient views.

² E.g. David, *Sparta*, accepts this explanation.

³ I am not convinced by the proposal of P. Hunt, 'Helots at the Battle of Plataea', *Historia* 46, 1997, 129–44, that the decision in 479 to lead out seven helots for every Spartiate is an indication that citizen numbers were already in decline (also in P. Hunt, *Slaves, Warfare and Ideology in the Greek Historians*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 32–9); the suggestion that the Spartiates constituted the front line of the battle formation with the helots behind seems implausible, granted that the latter do not appear to have been equipped as hoplites for the campaign (Hdt. 9.29.1).

⁴ Hodkinson, 'Land' and especially 'Inheritance', are the basic expositions, though these underpin the subsequent discussions in 'Warfare' and 'Society'.

⁵ Stephen Hodkinson, "Blind Ploutos"? Contemporary Images of the Role of Wealth in Classical

Sparta', in Powell and Hodkinson, *Shadow*, 183–222, 'Warfare' and 'Society'.

⁶ See in particular Hodkinson, 'Society', 92–3.

⁷ For the importance of client networks, see also Cartledge, *Agesilaos*, 139–59.

⁸ Finley, 'Sparta'.

14 *The Decline of Sparta*[†]

G. L. CAWKWELL

In CQ n.s. 26 (1976), 62–84 I argued that the defeat of Sparta in 371 BC was not due to the pursuit of unwise policies towards the other Greek states. Unwise policies there had been, Sparta being by no means superior to Athens in the formulation of foreign policy, but these did not affect the position on the eve of Leuctra when, with Thebes politically isolated, and with some of the Boeotians disaffected, Cleombrotus at the head of a numerically superior Spartan and allied army was poised for the destruction of Theban power; a triumph of policy it must have seemed. Sparta failed for military reasons. Her army was unequal to the military genius of Epaminondas.

However, when one reads that at Leuctra in an army of 10,000 hoplites, according to Plutarch (*Pelop.* 20. 1), there were no more than 700 Spartiates (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 4. 15), one is bound to consider whether the root cause of the defeat was not the shortage of Spartiates. According to Aristotle (*Pol.* 1270a33) the city ‘was destroyed because of shortage of manpower’ [*oliganthropia*], and many have found therein the real cause of Spartan failure. How far then was the failure of Sparta internal, the failure of her social system?

It may be noted at the outset that Aristotle may not have meant what he is commonly supposed to have meant. ‘The city did not stand up to a single blow, but was destroyed because of shortage of manpower.’ Aristotle may have meant that the city lacked the reserves of manpower to make good her losses in the battle, not that the defeat itself was due to shortage of Spartiates, and he may not therefore have provided the perfect text for the oft-repeated sermon. Yet Busolt concluded his masterly article ‘Spartas Heer und Leuktra’ (*Hermes* 40 [1905], 387–449), with these words, ‘In consequence of the decline of the Lacedaemonian army ... the disaster at Leuctra had become inevitable’ – a view many would echo.¹ An investigation of the decline of Spartan manpower and its effects is necessary if the argument I put forward is to stand unqualified.

I THE RATE OF DECLINE IN THE NUMBER OF SPARTIATES

Five thousand Spartiates marched out to the battle of Plataea in 479 BC (Hdt. 9. 10). They were the *neotés* [‘young men’] (ibid. 12), a term comparable to the Roman *iuniores*, and although we do not know what age-groups were involved and what proportion of the Spartiates were left behind as ‘homeguard’,

Herodotus' figure of 8,000 in all during the Persian Wars (7. 234. 2) is credible enough. By 371 BC there were no more than 1,000, a figure derived from Xenophon's account of the battle (*Hell.* 6. 4. 15, 17 and cf. 6. 1. 1) and confirmed by Aristotle (*Pol.* 1270a31). The rate of decline is, however, debated. If Thucydides' calculations for the Spartan army at First Mantinea in 418 BC (5. 68) were essentially correct, the total number of Spartiates at that date cannot have been much greater than 2,500 and possibly no more than 2, 100;² in which case Spartan power was rising at the very time that Spartiate numbers were falling dramatically. If, on the other hand, Thucydides was mistaken and the true number of Spartiates was more like 4,000 to 4,500, a completely different picture presents itself, viz. that Spartiate numbers declined only gradually in the fifth century and sufficed for victory in the Peloponnesian War and for the establishment of Spartan empire, but in the fourth there was a very dramatic decline indeed and one would be moved the more strongly to connect the failure of Sparta with this decline.

The reliability of Thucydides' calculations has long been questioned, but it will be convenient here to address ourselves to the arguments developed by A. J. Toynbee.³ He postulated two distinct phases in the development of the Spartan army. The first was the army of Plataea, in which Spartiates and Perioeci were brigaded separately, each in five *lochoi* ('companies') commanded by *lochagoi* ('company commanders'). The second was the army we meet in the pages of Xenophon, in which Spartiates and perioeci fought side by side mixed up within the same units, an army of six *morai* ('divisions') commanded by polemarchs. Since it is clear from Thucydides' account of the Spartan occupation of Sphacteria in 425 BC that at that time Spartiates and perioeci were indeed mixed up, Toynbee argued that the great reform of the Spartan army had already happened and that when Thucydides based his calculations on the assumption that the *lochos* was the largest unit, he was in error: a proper calculation of two *lochoi* to the *mora* would have produced an army, and consequently a total of Spartiates in 418 BC, roughly twice as large. In support of this thesis, Toynbee supposed that when Thucydides spoke of seven *lochoi* (5. 68) there were in truth six *morai* and one unit of Brasideans and Neodamodeis (5. 67. 1), and that Thucydides betrayed his error by listing polemarchs in the chain of command (5. 66. 3) and failing to take into account their unit, the *mora*, when making his calculation.

The theory is trebly false. There were polemarchs in the army of the Persian Wars (Hdt. 7. 173. 2), at which time their sole functions may have been regularly that of headquarters staff (cf. [Xen.] *Lac. Pol.* 13. 1) and occasionally that of command on expeditions inappropriate for a king (as in Hdt. loc. cit.).⁴ Thucydides may have been quite right not to provide for units for them. The presumption that Thucydides' seven units must have included the Brasideans and Neodamodeis is ill grounded. When Thucydides described the order of battle (5. 67), he sharply distinguished the Sciritans and the Brasideans and Neodamodeis from the *lochoi* of 'the Lacedaemonians themselves', and it is

extremely unlikely that when he made his calculations in the following chapter he would have been including as a *lochos* the force he had shortly before so distinguished.⁵ He did explicitly exclude the Sciritans from his calculations, but this is not to imply that he included the Brasideans and Neodamodeis. The Sciritans were a regular and well-known *lochos*, and remained so (cf. Diod. 15. 32. 1). The Brasideans and Neodamodeis were a variable and incalculable force⁶ which no one would confuse with one of the regular units of the Spartan army, and Thucydides may have felt no need explicitly to exclude. But the real weakness in Toynbee's case is in his ready assumption that in the army of the *lochoi* Spartiates and Perioeci were separately brigaded, not mixed up in the manner described by Isocrates (12. 180). It is indeed true that in 479 BC the 5,000 Spartiates and 5,000 perioeci marched out separately (Hdt. 9. 10. 1, 11. 3), for reasons only to be conjectured.⁷ But once the Spartan army was assembled in Boeotia there is in Herodotus' account of the actual fighting no trace of separate brigading. In his account of the order of battle (Ch. 28) he has 'ten thousand of the Lacedaemonians' on the right wing, and although 'the Spartiates chose to station the Tegeans next to themselves', he cannot mean that the non-Spartiates were on the extreme right with the Spartiates to their left, for in the preliminary operations Pausanias is said to have led 'the Spartiates' back 'to the right wing' (Ch. 47). At no point in the engagement does Herodotus clearly distinguish 'Spartiates' and 'Lacedaemonians', as a reading of Chapters 53–63 will show.⁸ He speaks for instance in Ch. 54. 2 of 'Spartiates' and three lines later of 'the Lacedaemonians'; in Ch. 56 Amompharetus is expected not to stand his ground with the Pitanate *lochos* when 'the other Lacedaemonians' were moving off; in the final stages 'the Lacedaemonians and the Tegeates' (Ch. 61. 2) were isolated. Clearly what at one point he calls 'the Laconian army' (Ch. 53. 4) remained together. Yet there were no non-Spartiates killed (70. 5, 85. 1). Tegeates were killed. Spartiates were killed. Where are the Perioecic dead? 'Many of the Lacedaemonians' were shot down (63. 1); no Perioeci were buried. Are we to suppose that the Perioeci brigaded separately, shared in the battle, with Spartiates dying to the right of them and Tegeates to the left, but miraculously escaped fatal casualties themselves? The whole story is consistent not with separate brigading, but with the Perioeci being in the rear ranks. The Spartiates in front bore the brunt (61. 3) and turned back the Persian attacks (62. 3). As Busolt rightly observed, in the army of the *morai* 'the strongest', i.e. the Spartiates, were always the ones who confronted the enemy [Xen.] *Lac. Pol.* 11. 8),⁹ though occasionally through the shortage of Spartiates Perioeci could find themselves in that distinguished position (Isoc. 12. 180). I submit that it was no different in the army of the *lochoi*, and that Toynbee's criterion for deciding whether the Spartan army we meet in the pages of Thucydides was in fact the army of the *morai* is unsound.

More serious arguments have been advanced by Andrewes,¹⁰ who 'with misgiving' believes 'that we should double Thucydides' figures'. First, he

argues that, whereas Thucydides stated that the Spartan array was greater than that of their opponents (5. 68. 1, 71. 2), the likely strength of the opposing forces was surely greater than that suggested by Thucydides' calculations. Secondly, the Thucydidean numbers for Mantinea seem inconsistent with the figure of about 6000 Lacedaemonian hoplites alleged by Xenophon for the battle of Nemea in 394 BC (*Hell.* 4. 2. 16). Thirdly, there are indications that in the first decades of the fourth century a *mora*, i.e. a sixth of the army, was at full strength larger than a *lochos* as described by Thucydides; the *mora* which was destroyed by Iphicrates in 390 BC, without the Amyclaeans who properly belonged to it (Xen. *Hell.* 4. 5. 11 f.), was 600 strong, even though it was unlikely to have been at full strength; Callisthenes, presumably describing events after 387/6, probably the Spartan operations in Boeotia in the 370s, gave the figure of 700 as the strength of the *mora*.¹¹ How then is one to explain what is an increase in Spartan strength, if Thucydides' calculations for 418 BC are correct?

The second and third of these arguments are easily blunted. After 424 BC, when Brasidas took a non-Spartiate force to Thrace (Thuc. 4. 80), Sparta more and more used non-Spartiates for military purposes. Neodamodeis were probably never incorporated in the *morai*,¹² to judge by their role on their last appearance in the evidence (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 5. 24), though there may have been enough of them at the battle of Nemea considerably to swell the total of the Spartan army, more of them indeed than moderns are prepared to allow. But there were two other sources of non-Spartiates in the *morai* which render inapposite comparison of the army of 418 BC with that of the early fourth century. First, the 'Inferiors' (Hypomeiones). It emerges from the story of the Conspiracy of Cinadon that they were 'in the army' [*suntetagmenoi*] (Xen. *Hell.* 3.3. 7).¹³ It is to be presumed that as the number of Spartiates declined, the number of 'Inferiors' grew. The decline was certainly not due to infertility; quite apart from the consideration that the group was too large to suffer the demographic effects of inbreeding, we have a firm indication in the existence of a substantial class of *nothoi* (bastards) (Xen. *Hell.* 5.3.9) that infertility was not the trouble. The cause of the decline was presumably where Aristotle (*Pol.* 1270a15 ff.) placed it, viz. In the system of land-tenure and the inequality of property; more and more Spartiates were unable to pay their share of the messes and had to drop out.¹⁴ The increase in the number of Inferiors did not necessarily equal the decrease in the number of Spartiates, but the Inferiors may have made an ever more considerable contribution to the strength of the *morai*. Of the growth of this class we can only conjecture, but it is to be noted that Herodotus knew only of Spartiates and Perioeci in the Spartan army (cf. 9. 10, 11), and the incorporation of the 'Inferiors' may well have been a post-Brasidean development. If so, it stultifies comparison of army strengths in 418 BC and the 390s. The other source of non-Spartiates, the Perioeci, may well have been drawn on ever more heavily. Diodorus records early in the 370s (Diod. 15. 31) a rearrangement of the military forces of the Peloponnesian

League. It may have been accompanied by a decision to call up more of the Perioeci but probably no such decision was needed. They had very little in the way of rights (cf. Isoc. 12. 180 f.), and Sparta could use them as freely as she wished. So neither of Andrewes' second and third arguments is of great force.

His first argument,¹⁵ however, is very serious. If the Spartan side at the battle of Mantinea was indeed greater than the opposite array, there must be something seriously awry with Thucydides' calculations. Such an error would be of far-reaching import. Thucydides appears to have known a great deal about Sparta. His exile gave him the chance to travel in the Peloponnese (5. 26. 5), and we see him at Sparta reflecting on the paradoxical contrast between the magnitude of Spartan power and influence and the puniness of the public buildings (1. 10. 2), just as we see him pondering the inscription at the tomb of Pausanias the Regent (1.134. 4). His information is remarkably full. He has penetrated 'the secrecy of the state' (5. 68) sufficiently to know about the massacre of the helots who deemed themselves worthy of liberation (4. 80. 3), though he appears not to know precisely when it happened.¹⁶ Impressively, he furnishes a large number of names and patronymics; for instance, he could give the names of all three commanders on Sphacteria and the order of seniority (4. 38. 1). A glance at the index to his *Histories* reveals a very ample knowledge of Spartan names and, more impressively, knowledge of social status (cf. 3. 5. 2, 8. 55. 2 for two men designated 'Lacôn', whatever he meant by that,¹⁷ no one else in the *Histories* being so designated; 8. 6. 4, 22. 1, a pair of Perioeci, again the only cases cited). It is notable that of the many Spartans he names only a certain number are described as 'Spartiate', and most of the rest are simply 'Lacedaemonians'; this is more likely due to his knowing when he did not know than to mere fitfulness of method.¹⁸ His restraint argues that he knew what he was talking about. Especially on military matters he manifests caution: 'it was difficult to ascertain the truth' about Spartan casualties (5. 74. 2); only a hearsay figure is given. Evidently Thucydides had tried, but been dissatisfied. It is therefore very striking when he makes a firm statement about Herodotus' 'Pitanate *lochos*' – 'it never existed' (1. 20. 3). He has been accused of pedantry,¹⁹ but he has evidently satisfied himself about the organisation of the army of the *lochoi*. It should indeed arouse 'misgiving' to suppose that his calculations for 418 BC are wrong by half. Only if there is no other way of explaining his statements about the superior size of the Spartan array should we have recourse to such a desperate hypothesis. And there is another way, viz. that Thucydides was alluding to the greater frontage of the Spartan array. 'The army of the Lacedaemonians *appeared* greater' ([*meizon ephane*] – 5. 68. 1). 'The Spartans and the Tegeans overlapped the Athenians still more, in so far as they had the greater army' – sc. the army with the greater frontage (5.71.2). The Spartans were generally eight deep (5. 68. 3), until Leuctra their steady practice.²⁰ But elsewhere different ideas were coming in. The Thebans at Delium were 25 deep (Thuc. 4. 93), half their depth at Leuctra (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 4. 12). The Syracusans in 415 were drawn up 16 deep

(Thuc. 6. 67). It would be no surprise if the Argives at Mantinea had adopted Theban ideas of depth.²¹ So there is a way of explaining Thucydides' statements other than the desperate hypothesis of Thucydides' making careless calculations, and without misgiving one can confidently accept his figures for the Spartan army in 418 BC.²²

The decline of numbers of Spartiates was steady enough. In the sixty years since the Persian Wars they had dropped by between 69 and 73 per cent, in the fifty years since 418 by between 60 and 54 per cent, the larger drop in the earlier period doubtless reflecting the effect of the great earthquake of 465 BC.²³ There was no dramatic drop in the fifty years before Leuctra, but despite the steady decline of the fifth century Sparta's military prowess continued. Overwhelmed in the utterly unprecedented style of warfare encountered on Sphacteria and thus causing the Greeks to wonder whether Sparta was losing her dash (Thuc. 5. 75. 3), she showed at Mantinea that her courage was still supreme (ibid. 5. 72. 2).

II COMPENSATION FOR DECLINING NUMBERS

After the dizzy excitement of 465 BC, the helots, whom Aristotle declared (Pol. 1269a38) to be continually waiting for an opportunity to attack, never revolted again until the Thebans invaded Laconia in 369 BC. The Spartans, however, never ceased to fear a helot uprising (cf. Thuc. 4. 80. 3), and not just in Messenia. The occupation of Pylos in 425 BC was quickly followed by the occupation of Cythera, and Spartan fears of the effects seem to have been much the same in the two cases (ibid. 4. 55, 5. 15) just as in each case helots, given the opportunity, took to deserting (ibid. 7. 26. 2).²⁴ So why were there no revolts between 465 and 369, or indeed after 369? The number of Spartiates was steadily declining throughout the period, and therefore, one would expect, the chances of successful revolt steadily increasing. Nor does there seem to have been any lack of opportunity. After the disaster of 425 Sparta was suspected of having gone 'soft' (Thuc. 5. 75. 3; cf. 4. 40), and when the Spartan army had to march out in haste to the battle of Mantinea, a helot revolt could have played a decisive part in the ruin of the state. Again, during the early days of the Corinthian War, the distractions of operations in Boeotia and round the Isthmus provided a suitable context. Why was there no revolt?

The answer may simply be that the helots were so afraid of reprisals that they would not move until Sparta had been defeated and a foreign army was in Laconia itself, the position in 369; in which case either Spartan fears of the helots were exaggerated or Spartan repression had successfully cowed them. However, that is not the impression one receives from Xenophon's account of the conspiracy of Cinadon (*Hell.* 3. 3. 4–11), which suggests that the Spartiates had very good reason to fear and that the Helots were very ready to play their part. Some further considerations seem to be called for to explain the long quiescence.

All the evidence concerning the condition of the helots suggests that they were treated with great severity and cruelty,²⁵ and continued to be so treated long after the liberation of Messenia. Both Theopompus, writing in the second half of the fourth century (*FGH* 115 F 13), and Myron of Priene, probably in the third (*FGH* 106 F 2), appear to be describing the position in their own day. So there is no reason to distinguish Messenian from Laconian helots as far as their treatment is concerned. However, there is strong reason to make the distinction with regard to their attitude to Sparta. The Messenians, as far as we know, remained uncompromisingly intransigent, pining for their long-lost liberty. The Laconian helots seem to have been curiously ambivalent. They were ready to desert in the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 7. 26. 2) and could be counted on by Cinadon (Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.6). Spartiates at home in Sparta did not dare to leave their shields in a usable condition (Critias DK 88 B 37). The Laconian helots had shown themselves at the time of the Great Earthquake as ready as the Messenians to make the most of Sparta's disasters (Plut. *Cim.* 16; Diod. 11. 63 f.), and the Spartiates never relaxed their guard or their severity. Yet in 369 an astonishing thing happened. Messenia was asserting its independence. Epaminondas, at the head of a huge army, had advanced into Laconia, for centuries inviolate, burning and pillaging – and the unwonted spectacle of smoke broke the Spartan women's wonted restraint (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 5. 28). Some of the Perioeci joined the Thebans in their attack (ibid. §32). Dissidence showed itself amongst even the Spartiates (Plut. *Ages.* 32). The unwall'd city was defended by what were and could be seen to be 'really few' Spartiates. It must have seemed to all the helots of Laconia that proud Sparta was on the point of destruction, that their oppressors would shortly oppress no more. In these circumstances 'the authorities saw fit to make a proclamation to the helots that if any was willing to take up arms and join the ranks, he should receive solemn assurances that those who joined in the fight would be free.' It was said that over 6,000 responded (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 5. 28 f.).²⁶ This is indeed astonishing. What had these helots to gain from Sparta which they would not gain from the Thebans?

There seems only one explanation of such conduct. The *mirage spartiate* bedazzled all classes alike. The Perioeci, who could be relied on to fight side by side with Spartiates, were so loyal that the Athenians in the Peloponnesian War saw fit only to ravage Perioecic territory,²⁷ not to expect revolt. The helots too were sufficiently loyal to wish only for freedom within the Spartan system, not for freedom from that system. It is notable that in the conspiracy of Cinadon, which embraced all classes of non-Spartiate, the aim of Cinadon was not necessarily radical. When asked what his intention had been, he replied that he wanted to be 'inferior to no one' in the state (Xen. *Hell.* 3. 3. 11), by which he may have meant no more than the status of 'Equal' (*homoios*). A revolution may have been planned very similar to that proposed by King Agis in 243 BC, viz. a vast increase of Spartiates (Plut. *Agis* 8) – a desire for social advancement, not for the eradication of the whole Spartiate order; what Agis

sought, Cleomenes realised (Plut. *Cleom.* 11), promptly seeking to revivify the ancient system of education (the *agogē*). The Spartan way of life was the ideal, or so all classes conceived it, including even those helots who were not imbued with Messenian nationalism.

How had Sparta won the loyalty of the oppressed? A large part of the answer must lie in the offer of social advancement. Ancient writers could dwell on the stability and the endurance of the Spartan constitution and find the secret in the nice balancing of constitutional principles.²⁸ More worthy of attention would have been the remarkable evolution of Spartan society. Herodotus appears to have known of only the threefold division of Spartiates, Perioeci and helots. By 400 the two classes of 'Inferiors' and 'Neodamodeis' have emerged (Xen. *Hell.* 3. 3. 6). In the third century Myron (F1) can name no less than five kinds of freed slave. When this differentiation of society began we can only guess, but the information Thucydides provides about the Neodamodeis suggests that the decision in 424 BC to allow Brasidas to use non-Spartiates in the service of the state (4. 80) was a major turning point. He first mentions them, and as a distinct class, in 421 BC (5. 34. 1), and in view of their constant use thereafter on military service it seems unlikely that such a class existed when Brasidas marched out with his 700 helot hoplites. So the creation of a distinct class of Neodamodeis formalised what Brasidas had begun.²⁹ What exactly their status was, in what sense they were, as the name suggests, 'newly put in the *damos*', we can only conjecture, but whatever it was, clearly there was now a career open to military talent and the will to serve Sparta's interests. It was not, strictly speaking, the first moment that the principle of promotion was applied. In 425 BC helots who were ready to help break the blockade of Sphacteria were promised their freedom (Thuc. 4. 26. 5), and such promises may have been made and acted on, for all we know, at an earlier date. But that 424 BC was a turning point is clear from Thucydides' contrast with what had happened earlier when 2,000 helots had betrayed their uppishness by responding to a Spartan offer of freedom (4. 80), and it seems safe to assert that it was in the latter part of the Archidamian War that Sparta began a regular policy of social advancement for helots.³⁰ Nor was it confined to strictly military functions. The Thebans in their appeal to Athens in 395 BC are made by Xenophon (*Hell.* 3. 5. 12) to assert that the Spartans 'think fit to appoint helots as harmosts'; presumably these were liberated helots, but it is remarkable that men of helot origin could be deemed trustworthy agents of Spartan policy.³¹

Sparta in the last two decades of the fifth century must have been becoming a very different place from what it had been. In 413 the Spartans 'picked out the best of the helots and the Neodamodeis', 600 hoplites in all, and sent them to fight in Sicily (Thuc. 6. 19. 3). Presumably they shortly returned with experience of war and the confidence of victory, and lived within the state until they were next used. Evidently the Spartans did not too greatly fear to have such trained warriors in their midst. The very people once the most likely

to join in revolt had been won over by the prospect of promotion and the enjoyment of their new status.

Nor was it only helots who shared in this change of policy. In the Ionian War we meet a Perioecus in command of a squadron of thirteen ships (Thuc. 8. 22. 1). The Spartan commander sent out by the city with 700 hoplites to assist Cyrus in his revolt, Chirisophus, had as his second-in-command Neon of Asine (Xen. *Anab.* 1. 4. 3, 5. 3. 4), who was presumably a Perioecus, sent out on service. Other cases can be no more than suspected,³² but clearly the great extension of Spartan operations and Spartan influence had opened up prospects of honourable posts for many non-Spartiates. But the change for the helots was the most important, for it must have enormously reduced the danger of helot revolt, and therein must be found a large part of the explanation of Sparta's freedom from helot uprising in the seventy years before the Thebans liberated Messenia.

All this, however, only indirectly affected the Messenians. If the Laconian helots were bought off, any helot revolt would be confined to Messenia, but that would hardly deter if Spartan military power was declining as fast as the number of Spartiates. There were, however, compensatory factors.

The 'Inferiors' of whom we hear only in Xenophon's account of the conspiracy of Cinadon must always have existed in some number. To be a Spartiate it was necessary both to have been through the *agoge*, the education system, and to make one's contribution to the common messes, the *syssitia*, and it is likely that there had always been those who could not fulfil the latter condition and thus ceased to rate as Spartiates. Down to 425 BC, to judge by the fact that neither Herodotus nor Thucydides appears to conceive of others than Spartiates and Perioeci composing the army, those lost in this way to the numbers of Spartiates were lost to the army. But by the turn of the century these 'Inferiors' were, as already noted, 'in the army' (*suntetagmenoi*), and there was this compensation for the loss of numbers. As to when precisely they were incorporated, there is no way of knowing, but once Sparta had begun to use Neodamodeis and helots as hoplites, it is unlikely that the use of 'Inferiors' would be long delayed, especially considering that a good number, if not all, had probably been through the *agoge*, part of the class of so-called Mothakes.

We have it on the authority of Phylarchus³³ that 'the Mothakes are foster-brothers of the Lacedaemonians: for each of the sons of the citizens, adopting according to their means some a single one, some a pair, certain a greater number, make them their foster-brothers. So the Mothakes are free yet not Lacedaemonians, and they had a full share in the education'. Some of the lexicographers' notices³⁴ might suggest that the Mothakes were slaves, but if Phylarchus is right in adding 'They say that Lysander was one of them', and Aelian (*VH* 12. 43) right in saying that Callicratidas, Gylippus and Lysander were Mothakes, the lexicographers must be mistaken. There is no good reason to reject their evidence.³⁵ Likewise when Phylarchus speaks of

‘Lacedaemonians’ he must mean Spartiates, for only the sons of Spartiates automatically went through the *agoge*. So from the Mothakes Sparta could draw an ample enough supply of men who could compensate in the army for the ever-diminishing number of Spartiates. But were the ‘Inferiors’ Mothakes? Since the term ‘Inferiors’ occurs only once, one cannot be sure, but when one considers that the ‘Inferior’ Cinadon was given a *scytale* and was told to go and ‘order the most senior of the *Hippagretae*’ (who were Spartiates) (Xen. *Hell.* 3. 3. 9), it seems likely that the ‘Inferiors’ had been through the *agoge* as Mothakes. Both the Mothakes Gylippus and Lysander were sons of Spartiates but probably ‘Inferiors’ in status. Their subsequent careers showed they were not inferior in military skill. It is probable that they had been through the *agoge*, and in general it seems reasonable to suppose that ‘Inferiors’ were Mothakes and that they were good military material – a partial compensation for the decline of Spartiates.

But if the training of ‘Inferiors’ was a source of strength for Spartan military forces, so too were the other Mothakes, what Xenophon terms (*Hell.* 5. 3. 9) ‘foreigners of the so-called *trophimoi*’, a term which might be translated ‘foster-children’ and which appears to be the same as Phylarchus’ *syntrophoi* (‘foster-brothers’), those from whom Agis in 243 BC proposed to recruit a large number of Spartiates (Plut. *Agis* 8. 3) [‘of the foreigners, as many as had received a free upbringing’].³⁶ Three such are known to us, viz. the sons of Xenophon (Diogenes Laertius 2. 54) and the son of Phocion (Plut. *Phoc.* 20), but to judge by what is said of Phlius in 380 BC this class of persons was very numerous. Agesilaus was accused of embroiling the Spartans with a city of over 5,000 citizens ‘for the sake of a few men’. So he prescribed messes and training for all those who came over to the Spartan side, and there were found ‘more than a thousand men, in excellent physical condition, good at military drill and very good with their hoplite equipment’ (Xen. *Hell.* 5. 3. 16 f.). Of course, it is not suggested that all this thousand had been to Sparta for the *agoge*; if as many as that had come from a single small city, the sons of Spartiates would have been swamped. But the story does suggest that enough Peloponnesians had imbibed the values of the *agoge* to export Spartan military excellence to their own cities. There is no way of knowing when this great diffusion of virtue began. The sons of ‘the best men’ of the Peloponnesian League may have been going to Sparta for a Spartan education for generations, but it is possible that the habit grew in reaction to the spread of sophistic influence.³⁷ Certainly in the course of time the effect must have been cumulative, and it is likely that the decline in the numbers of Spartiates in the Spartan army itself was matched by some increase in the effectiveness of the Peloponnesian allies.

There is therefore no great problem in explaining why the helots, especially the Messenian helots, refrained from revolt for almost a century after the Great Earthquake. Spartiate numbers steadily fell. Spartan power supported by the Peloponnesian League remained formidable. Only in the shadow of Theban

defeat and the distraction of Theban invasion was Sparta unequal to Messenian nationalism.

III THE NEGLECT OF THE LAWS OF LYCURGUS

Before going on to consider the condition of the Spartan army as a whole at the time of the battle of Leuctra, it would be well to treat of the Spartiates themselves. Had they become less formidable themselves?

If anyone asked me whether I think the laws of Lycurgus still today remain unshaken, I could no longer assert this with confidence. For I am aware that once the Spartans preferred to associate with each other at home with moderate possessions rather than to be corrupted as imperial officials (*[harmazontas en tais poleis, 'governors in the cities']*) subject to flattery. I am also aware that previously they were afraid to be thought to possess gold; now there are some who even preen themselves on having acquired it. I know that previously the purpose of expelling foreigners from the state and not being allowed to go abroad was to stop the citizens copying foreigners and taking their fill of easy living; now, I know, those who are thought to be the most important have exerted themselves never to stop being imperial officials abroad ...

Thus the author of the Xenophontic *Constitution of the Spartans* (ch. 14),³⁸ and the passage is freely quoted to support the idea that there was a slackening of Spartiate moral fibre.

Much has been made of the corrupting effects of the importation of wealth,³⁹ but the matter should be viewed with scepticism. When at the end of the Peloponnesian War Lysander sent home the money in his possession, it was proposed that this gold and silver coin should not be allowed to remain in the city and that the ancient iron spits should continue to be the only currency in the city. The matter was resolved by deciding to keep the gold and silver coin in the care of the state and to use it strictly for purposes of state but to retain for individual citizens the ancient currency. This is the account of Plutarch (*Lys.* 17), who proceeds to moralise on the demoralising effect on individuals of seeing the state value what they were expected to spurn.⁴⁰ But the account of the debate is unsatisfactory. Sparta must always have held some money in a form acceptable to the rest of the Greeks. One can hardly imagine ambassadors going abroad with no means of paying their expenses or with a cart-load of useless spits. Further, since 424 BC at least, Sparta had made use of mercenaries of some sort (cf. *Thuc.* 4. 80. 5), who were not to be satisfied with payments in iron spits. So there can have been no great breach of principle in 404 BC. Whatever the alternative proposed, the decision was precisely that accepted by Plato in the *Laws* (742a, b) who saw that 'Hellenic currency' was necessary 'for campaigns and foreign travel' but omitted discussion of the

disastrous effects on which Plutarch dilates, with considerable exaggeration.⁴¹ Love of money was an ancient Spartan disease to judge by the oracle delivered three centuries earlier (Plut. *Mor.* 239 f.) and by the frequent charges of corruption made against eminent Spartans.⁴² 'The love of money, and nothing else, will destroy Sparta' ran the oracle (Aristotle, frag. 501), but it had been a long time about its work of destruction. One should therefore regard the statements about the great change in the early fourth century with great scepticism.

The charge that service abroad as imperial officials had damaged the Spartan way of life at home is more difficult to assess. Startling allegations about the conduct abroad of Pausanias the Regent, who 'could no longer live in the established manner' (Thuc. 1. 130. 1), presumably reflect Spartan fears of what might become of a Spartiate removed from the careful supervision of the state. Brasidas, Thucydides seems to imply (4.81.3), was the virtuous exception. Clearchus behaved with all too Spartan severity and, when recalled, refused to obey (Diod. 14. 12, Xen. *Anab.* 2. 6). But in general the supervision of the state was effective enough and a single *scytale* would recall the errant official. Xenophon noted that Dercyllidas was 'always fond of being abroad' (*Hell.* 4. 3. 2), but one suspects exaggeration in the author of *The Constitution of Sparta*. The ephors kept control and it seems unlikely that any Spartiate who wanted to be constantly abroad would have been able to get his way.

Spartiates probably remained as formidable as ever on the field of battle. In the Corinthian War the Argives had shown a marked reluctance to face the Lacedaemonian shields, venturing against them when they thought from the Sigma on the shields the Spartans had picked up that they were facing Sicyonians and quickly retiring when they discovered the truth (Xen. *Hell.* 4. 4. 10 f.). There is no suggestion in either Diodorus' account of the battle of Leuctra (15. 55 esp. §4) or Xenophon's (*Hell.* 6. 4. 13 f.) that the Spartiates did not fight with great courage or that the heroism of Cleonymus (Xen. *Hell.* 5. 4. 33) was unique. After the battle some of the Spartans were unwilling to make a truce and were only forced to do so by the reluctance of the allies (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 4. 14 f.). Plutarch (*Ages.* 30. 2) does speak of 'those who had been cowards in the battle, whom the Spartans term "quakers" ([*tresantes*])' but 'cowardice' at Sparta was not cowardice in the sight of other men. The man who was unable to join in the battle at Thermopylae in 480 BC because he had an infection of the eyes and could not see was treated as a 'quaker' (Hdt. 7. 229–31). Not to die in a battle that was lost was deemed disgraceful (cf. Xen. *Hell.* 6. 4. 16).⁴³ At the Pathos at Lechaeum in 390 BC 250 out of 600 in the *mora* were killed, but Xenophon remarked that only those who were wounded and were ordered to be carried from the battlefield 'were truly saved' (*Hell.* 4. 5. 12, 17, 14): presumably the rest were treated as 'quakers'. To survive a lost battle was held to be equivalent to fleeing from the enemy (cf. Hdt. 9. 53. 2, 55. 2); the survivors of Leuctra were therefore 'quakers'. But this does not prove that they had not fought bravely or unworthily of the Spartan tradition at Leuctra. Only

later did 'prudence' begin to show itself (cf. Xen. *Hell.* 7. 4. 25), an attitude against which the young Archidamus was made by Isocrates to argue (in *Oration* 7); even so Archidamus can claim that devotion to the original 'laws and practices' of the state is as strong as ever (§61). The Spartiates themselves had not gone 'soft'.

IV THE DEFEAT AT LEUCTRA

But what of the Spartan army as a whole? The Spartiates, who devoted their whole time to training for war, may have been as good as ever, but, it is thought, they were so few in number that the Spartan army as a whole must have been weaker and the disaster was for that reason inevitable. It is the argument of this section that it was not the shortage of Spartiates that made the result of the battle inevitable. The right explanation is to be found in the Theban development of the art of war. Of course, there can be no proof that if there had been more Spartiates on the field of battle, the result would or would not have been the same. At First Mantinea the Spartan army had been outmanoeuvred but had survived by courage (Thuc. 5. 72. 2). Courage, however, is not always sufficient, as the battle on Sphacteria had shown (Thuc. 4. 40). At Leuctra the Spartan army was utterly out-generalled.

In considering the state of the Spartan military power in 371, the allies can be left out of account. It is indeed possible that the army of the Peloponnesian League as a whole was a more effective fighting force than it had been. The diffusion of Spartan methods and discipline through 'the foreigners of the so-called *trophimoi*' (Xen. *Hell.* 5. 3. 9), who were 'a really splendid sight and not without experience of the city's ideals', continued to leaven the whole.⁴⁴ The reform of the league in 378 BC (Diod. 15. 31. 1 f.) had perhaps secured that the league armies were larger, or at any rate better organised.⁴⁵ The system instituted in either 382 or 378, whereby members of the league could pay for the requisite number of troops instead of themselves providing them,⁴⁶ may in an age of ever-increasing professionalism have been an advantage. But all this was irrelevant to the battle of Leuctra; there were no members of the Peloponnesian League involved (cf. Xen. *Hell.* 6. 4. 18) and Epaminondas so contrived that none of Sparta's other allies there present had any part in the actual fighting (cf. Paus. 9. 13. 12). It is the Spartan army itself that must be considered.

Here a serious difficulty presents itself. We have no precise information on the amount of military training undergone by the non-Spartiates in the army. The Spartiates' whole lives were devoted to war and they were enabled to this because they and they alone had the leisure afforded by others' labour. But since non-Spartiates fought with them 'mixed up', the non-Spartiates must have had a great deal more military training than was usual elsewhere in the fifth century. For even if the Spartiates were vastly superior in physical fitness and in weapon training, for drill the whole army would have had to practise.

The Greeks generally thought the Spartan drills very complicated ([Xen.] *Lac. Pol.* 11. 5, 8) and the author of *The Constitution of the Spartans* felt it necessary to explain them. The non-Spartiates in the army needed to be well practised in them, if confusion was to be avoided. The manoeuvre ordered by Agis at Mantinea during the advance into action (Thuc. 5. 71. 3, 72. 1) was only conceivable if all parts of his army were well trained in it. So the non-Spartiates must have been involved in regular and unusually frequent training. To some extent this must be true of weapons drill too. If Perioeci occasionally fought in the front rank as Isocrates asserts (12. 180), they must have been well enough trained in weapons drill if they were not to let the side down and expose those they fought beside to danger, but even when there were ample Spartiates to fill the front rank, it would have been necessary to have the non-Spartiates sufficiently drilled for critical moments. All members of the Spartan army were required by law to keep fit and train while on campaign ([Xen.] *Lac. Pol.* 12. 5), but fitness could not be maintained if what happened on campaign was exceptional. Indeed excellent physical condition is ascribed to various kinds of non-Spartiates (Xen. *Hell.* 5.3.9, 17, Plut. *Agis* 8. 3), and not just that, but a share of Spartan valour as well. Herodotus (7. 234. 2) speaks of the Perioeci as ‘good’ ([*agathoi*]); Xenophon (*Hell.* 5.3.9) says that the many Perioeci who volunteered for service under Agesipolis were ‘noble and good’, and that the *trophimoi* and bastard sons of the Spartiates were ‘not without experience of the city’s ideals’. All in all, it seems likely that the non-Spartiates had a considerable amount of training in both weapons drill and tactics, and more importantly had become to no small degree copies of Spartiate virtue. Spartiates and non-Spartiates seem to have looked alike on the battlefield, purple-clad and longhaired.⁴⁷ In the course of time there may not have been a very marked difference in their fighting.

Time may have blurred the difference in fighting fitness and in valour between Spartiate and non-Spartiate. It had certainly blurred the difference between Sparta and the rest of the Greek world.⁴⁸ The days had passed when others were mere ‘improvisers of military things’ and the Spartans alone ‘craftsmen of war’ ([Xen.] *Lac. Pol.* 13. 5). As Aristotle remarked (*Pol.* 1338b24–38), Spartan superiority had in the past derived from the fact that Spartans alone trained for war, whereas latterly others had matched their professionalism: ‘now they have rivals in their education; formerly they had none’. The days had passed when, as at First Mantinea, superior courage could make up for failures in command. In particular the Thebans under Epaminondas seem to have set about military training with Spartan zeal. His own concern is explicitly attested (Nepos. *Epaminondas* 2. 4 f.). He insisted that those who were to be hoplites had to train not just as athletes but as soldiers (Plut. *Mor.* 192c). Xenophon noted (*Hell.* 6. 5. 23) that the Thebans in Arcadia in winter 370/69 BC regularly trained (cf. Plut. *Mor.* 788a);⁴⁹ the complicated tactic adopted at Leuctra argues that the army was uncommonly well trained from an earlier date. When he became Boeotarch, he warned his

countrymen that he was bent on war, that Boeotia would be 'the dancing-floor of war' (Plut. *Mor.* 193d). Doubtless he took pains to train his 'dancers' well. As far as training was concerned, at Leuctra the Spartans met their match. In describing the preparations for Leuctra Diodorus (15. 50. 5) wrote of the Thebans: 'With constant exercise in the gymnasia, they were strong in body, and being by nature given to war, they were the inferiors in courage of no Greek people.' The Spartans no longer had a monopoly of valour. The battle would be decided by what Thucydides (5. 72. 2) had termed [*empeiria* ('experience')].

Xenophon's remark (*Hell.* 4. 3. 16) about the uniqueness of the battle of Coronea could with justice have been repeated about any of the subsequent military engagements in the period he covered. The Pathos in Lechaem of 390 BC, which was the most startling demonstration of the new importance of the light-armed, was unique in the severity of the casualties inflicted by light-armed on hoplites. The operations in Boeotia in the 370s manifested new techniques in the defence of territory.⁵⁰ The battle of Tegyra of 375 BC, admittedly a somewhat dark affair since Xenophon preferred not to mention it,⁵¹ involved a joint action of cavalry and the professional infantry of the Sacred Band, probably unprecedented. The truth is that the art of war was developing so fast that every battle was in some sense novel. Of particular relevance to Leuctra, however, was the battle of Nemea in 394 BC. In this action the right wings of both armies began by moving to the right (Xen. *Hell.* 4. 2. 18 f.) with the aim of encircling their opponents. Encirclement was not new, but the deliberate attempt to prepare for it in the approach march certainly was. Furthermore Theban conceptions of depth prevailed on the Allied side. Before the battle it was agreed to draw up the army sixteen deep; when the Thebans' turn to command came round, they made their army 'thoroughly deep' (Xen. *Hell.* 4. 2. 13, 18), which may mean that they adopted the formation of the battle of Delium (Thuc. 4. 93. 4). So when the Spartans came to Leuctra, they probably expected to face something similar. They therefore abandoned their ancient favoured depth of eight and formed up twelve deep (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 4. 12), and sought to move to their right (Plut. *Pelop.* 23. 2). The Thebans did not act as expected. They concentrated themselves fifty deep (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 4. 12) on the left wing, an unheard-of thing, advanced to battle 'obliquely', i.e. in such a way that the Thebans would engage the Spartans before contact was possible elsewhere, ensured protection for the rest of the army by advancing while the cavalry action was still in progress, and finally prevented the Spartan encircling movement.⁵² How exactly the engagement went between the twelve-deep Spartans and the fifty-deep Thebans is a matter for speculation. Epaminondas hardly adopted such a depth to spare the men in the rear an active share in the battle, but one can only guess. But it is clear that the Spartans were confronted by a wholly novel tactical situation. They fought with great bravery but were utterly out-generalled. New ways of war had undone them.

V THE FAILURE OF SPARTA

In the fifty years before Leuctra Spartan society changed remarkably, but the formal constitution of the state did not. In particular, the Kings remained the hereditary generals, and although they performed this function as adequately as their predecessors, they were not the men to experiment and innovate. At a time when the art of war was developing so rapidly in the rest of the Greek world, Spartan methods remained essentially the same. Hence the disaster of Leuctra.

The failure of Sparta is the analogue of the failure of Greece. It was not due to moral decline. It was not due to mistakes of policy abroad or internal corruption. In each case it was the triumph of military genius. Epaminondas was too good for Sparta, just as Philip was to prove too good for Greece.

† Reprinted from *Classical Quarterly* 33, 1983, 385–400, by permission of the Classical Association, and of the author.

¹ cf., most recently, P. A. Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia* (1979), 317.

² If the proportion of Spartiates to non-Spartiates in the λόχοι [*lochoi*, the divisions of the Spartan army] at First Mantinea was the same as that amongst the captives from Sphacteria, i.e. 120 to 172 (Thuc. 4. 38. 5), there were about 1472 Spartiates in the λόχοι, to which must be added the sixth sent home (Thuc. 5. 64. 3) and the 300 *hippeis* (ibid. ch. 72. 4) and certain officers etc., so that there were about 2, 100 in all. If proportionately more Spartiates were killed on Sphacteria than non-Spartiates, and if the proportion of Spartiates to non-Spartiates had been in fact the same as in 479 B.C., a figure approaching 2,500 results. Cf. Busolt, *Hermes* (1905), 403 ff.

³ Toynbee's views were first stated in *JHS* 33 (1913), 246–75 and restated in *Some Problems of Greek History* (1969), 365–417. They conditioned Wade-Gery's discussion in *Essays in Greek History*, [(Oxford, 1958)], 71 ff.

⁴ cf. Busolt, art. cit. 418.

⁵ A. Andrewes, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* iv. 112, like many others (e.g. W. G. Forrest, *History of Sparta*, [(London, 1968)] 132), takes the contrary view. His presumption is that Thucydides' calculation at 5. 68. 3 was intended to account for every Lacedaemonian on the field of battle, but he admits that the 'few Lacedaemonians' on the right wing (ch. 67. 1) were not included and debates whether the 300 *hippeis* of 72. 4 were included. Cf. [G. Busolt and H. Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde*, II (Munich, 1926)], 710.

⁶ 700 originally accompanied Brasidas (Thuc. 4. 80. 5). The number of the original Neodamodeis, first met at Thuc. 5. 34. 1, is beyond conjecture. If there were troops of this class in the force that Ischagoras was to take out in 423 (Thuc. 4. 132. 2) or in the force that went in 422 (Thuc. 5. 2. 1), they may have been quite numerous (cf. 5. 31. 4, 49. 1). But Thucydides probably had not the necessary information to calculate their number in 418 B.C.

⁷ Herodotus would have it thought that the Spartans were waiting for the Isthmus wall to be more nearly completed (9. 7. 1), and the celebration of the Hyacinthia was only a pretext. But as Xen. *Hell.* 4. 5. 11 makes clear, if they had gone out earlier, the Amyclaeans would have returned. So the Spartans had to wait until the festival was ended to order out the army, which went out quickly and waited in Arcadia for the Perioeci, just as in 386 Agesilaus marched to Tegea and summoned the Perioeci thither (Xen. *Hell.* 5. 1. 33), at a time when it is sure that there was no separate brigading (*pace* Beloch, *Klio* 6 [1906], 63 f., who rejects the evidence of Isoc. 12. 271).

⁸ In Ch. 29 he speaks of the [*Spartiatike taxis*] and then of [*hoi Lakedaimonoî*]. The word [*taxis*] seems to be rather used by Herodotus (cf. 6. 3. 3, 9. 31. 2, where it seems to be equivalent to 'rank'), and here he uses the word as a means of marking the variation in the number of light-armed attached to the two types of Spartan hoplite. In his account of the battle itself there is no trace of different formations of Spartiates and non-Spartiates.

⁹ Busolt, art. cit. 423. For the practice of always having the best troops in the front, cf. Asclepiodotus 3. 5, 6, and 10. 14 (the Laconian counter-march). The famous single line at Dipaea (Isoc. 6. 99) should not be taken to mean that there was literally a single rank of Spartans facing the Arcadians; no matter how valorous the warriors, victory for such a formation would have been impossible in a hoplite battle. What

Isocrates refers to presumably is that there were only enough Spartiates available to fill the front rank.

Fatal casualties on the field of battle were light and confined to those who withstood the first shock, but there may have been ample wounded amongst the non-Spartiates. (The cenotaph of the *Aeginctans* at Plataea about which Herodotus was scornful (9. 85. 3) may have been set up to commemorate men who later died of their wounds.) For the vulnerability of hoplites, cf. Xen. *Anab.* 3. 4. 30, 32.

¹⁰ Ad. Thuc. 5. 68. 3, written before the publication of Toynbee, *Some Problems*.

¹¹ Plut. *Pelop.* 17, Diod. 15. 32. 1.

¹² cf. Forrest, op. cit. 132.

¹³ For the term, cf. Wade-Gery, *Essays*, 83 n. 1.

¹⁴ Toynbee, *Some Problems*, frequently speaks of the 'Inferiors' as Spartiates; cf. 310, 343, 346 n. 2. Since, in the one passage where the term is used (Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.5 ff.), they are plainly treated as not being Spartiates, it is hard to see why.

¹⁵ Also discussed by Toynbee, *Some Problems*, 400.

¹⁶ He makes clear that it is earlier than 424 B.C. (cf. ['and then'], 4. 80. 5), but is not precise. ['in the wars'] (§3) suggests the troubled period, 480–460 B.C.

¹⁷ cf. Bolte, *RE* III A. 2, cols. 1283 ff.

¹⁸ For instance in Book 8, Thucydides describes seven persons new to the *History* as Spartiate, in addition to the four he names as nauarchs; then four are described as 'Lacedaemonian', one as 'Lacon'; ten lack any designation. Four Spartans receive patronymics, nineteen none. On two occasions he names two Spartans, one with patronymic, one without.

¹⁹ cf. Wade-Gery, art. cit. 76.

²⁰ See the table in W. K. Pritchett, *Ancient Greek Military Practices* 1 (Berkeley, 1971; republished as *The Greek State at War* 1 (Berkeley, 1974)), 135.

²¹ cf. their development of a corps d'élite (Thuc. 5. 67. 2, 81. 2; Diod. 12. 79. 4; Paus. 2. 20. 2).

²² Andrewes, op. cit. 126, states that 5. 74. 1 'clearly demands that exceptional numbers of troops were engaged', but Thucydides constantly (and curiously) resorts to superlatives and he may mean no more than that the battle was very great in the sense that it was of very great importance.

²³ Toynbee, *Some Problems*, 349 f., unwisely follows L. Ziehen, 'Das spartanische Bevölkerungsproblem', *Hermes* 68 (1933), 231 f., in taking Diodorus' figure of 20,000 casualties (11. 63) literally, but clearly the earthquake had very serious demographic effects, to judge by Sparta's reaction to events on Sphacteria (cf. also n. 9 for the shortage of Spartiates at the battle of Dipaea).

²⁴ The Athenians built a fort in Laconia opposite Cythera in 413, which they had to abandon after the Sicilian disaster but which was intended as a haven for deserting Laconian Helots (Thuc. 7. 26. 2, 8. 4). Xenophon (*Hell.* 4. 8. 8) records the occupation of Cythera and the installation of an Athenian as harmost in 393 B.C.; the fact that Xenophon makes no mention of unrest and desertions on the mainland proves nothing. The only record of desertion in the *Hellenica* concerns Corcyra (6. 2. 15), but it was a fact of Greek life which Xenophon saw no reason to mention or else preferred not to mention.

²⁵ Cartledge op. cit. 347–56 has a useful collection of evidence.

²⁶ Diodorus 15. 65. 6 alludes to the 'recent freeing' of the helots and gives the figure of 1000, but, if that is the figure he actually wrote and if it is correct, the argument is not basically affected.

²⁷ Thuc. 2. 56. 6, 3. 16. 2, 4. 56. 2, 7. 18. 3, 26. 2. Cf. F. Hampl, 'Die lakedämonischen Periöken', *Hermes* 72 (1937), 24.

²⁸ Thuc. 1. 18, Plato *Laws* 712d, Arist. *Pol.* 1294b14 ff., Polyb. 6. 10. 6–11.

²⁹ The various appearances of the Neodamodeis are listed by Toynbee, *Some Problems*, 380 n. 1. For fuller discussion, see V. Ehrenberg, *RE* XVI. 2, cols. 2396–2401. Cf. R. F. Willetts, 'The Neodamodeis', *CPh* 49 (1959), 27–32. It is to be noted that the one thousand Neodamodeis of Xen. *Hell.* 3. 1. 4 are referred to in Diod. 14. 36. 1 as ['citizens'], and that Pausanias the Regent is said by Thucydides (1. 132. 4) to have offered the Helots ['freedom ... and citizen rights']. F. Hampl, art. cit. 26 f., argues that the Neodamodeis were helots promoted to the same status as Perioeci.

³⁰ The class of freedman called [*desposionautai*] mentioned by Myron F 1, to judge by the name, probably came into existence as Sparta concerned herself more with the sea, another instance of promotion to meet the needs of the Peloponnesian War.

³¹ The reading of one manuscript, τῶν Εἰλώτων ἐνιδουλεύειν ['to be slaves to one (*eni*) of the helots'], at Isoc. 4. 111 is normally preferred and reference to Lysander is presumed (cf. J.-F. Bommelaer, *Lysandre de Sparte* [1981], 38); in which case it is notable that Isocrates finds such a role for a helot conceivable. But the right reading may be [*eniosis*, 'some'], and provide confirmation of the statement in the Theban speech quoted in the text.

³² There is no explicit evidence that Eteonicus was a Spartiate, save Pausanias 10. 9. 9 f., which may be doubted; Pausanias may simply have presumed that the subordinates of Lysander at Aegospotami

were both Spartiates, though §10 suggests that the inscriptions on the statues at Delphi described them simply as [*Lakedaimonioi*]. Thucydides (8. 23) refrained from social designation. At *Hell.* 1. 1. 32 Xenophon describes him as ['the Laconian harmost']. If he was not a Spartiate, he had a very striking career, for which see Poralla, *Prosopographie der Lak.* 53. (Xenophon's use of [*Lakon*, 'Laconian'] is an uncertain guide. Chiriosophus is [*Lakon*] at *Anab.* 2. 1. 5, 6. 1. 32; [*Lakedaimonios*] at *Anab.* 1. 4. 3–cf. Diod. 14. 27. 1; *Anab.* 4. 6. 14 makes it probable if not certain that he was a Spartiate.) Charminus and Polyneus (*Anab.* 7. 6. 1, 7, 39) may not have been Spartiates. Busolt, *Gr. Ges.* 3. 2. 1532 n., may not have been right to presume that Pasippidas (Xen. *Hell.* 1. 1. 32) was nauarch, which would require that he was Spartiate.

³³ FGH 81 F 43.

³⁴ Conveniently set out by D. Lotze on p. 426 f. of his article 'Μόθκες', *Historia* 11 (1962).

³⁵ Callicratidas and Lysander were certainly, as nauarchs, Spartiates, Gylippus probably (Thucydides never says as much, but it is probably Gylippus to whom he refers at 7. 58. 3, and not Ekkritos, the Spartiate commander of 7. 19. 3; cf. 6. 91. 4, 93. 2, 7. 2. 1). But that does not reflect on whether they were promoted [*mothakes*]. Nothing is known of the youth of Callicratidas, but the discrediting of Gylippus' father (Plut. *Per.* 22) may have down-graded the son, and Lysander is explicitly stated to have been 'brought up in poverty' (Plut. *Lys.* 2). J.-F. Bommelaer, op. cit. 36–8, for no good reason rejects the evidence of Phylarchus.

³⁶ cf. Ehrenberg, *RE* VII A. 1, cols. 675 f.

³⁷ cf. the law of Critias (Xen. *Mem.* 1. 2. 31) and Xenophon's criticism of sophistic education (*On Hunting* 13).

³⁸ F. R. Wüst, 'Laconica', *Klio* 37 (1959), 53–60, unconvincingly argued that the treatise belonged to the period of Cleómenes III, but I follow K. M. T. Chrimmes, *The Respublica Lacedaemoniorum ascribed to Xenophon* (1948), in rejecting Xenophon as the author. Ch. 14 appears to have been written in the 390s, to which the remark about those wanting to be continually abroad as harmosts seems more appropriate than later, and indeed in 395/4 B.C., a year to which the statement that 'now many are summoning each other to prevent them (sc. the Spartans) getting empire again ([*palin*])' seems especially suitable, the danger in that year being that Sparta might set up decarchies again. It is most unlikely that at the very time that Xenophon was with admiring eyes serving under Agesilaus in Asia and before he had experience of Spartans in Sparta, he would have written such a chapter. (Cf. Chrimmes, 24–8 for other strong arguments.) If Ch. 14, as it seems to be, is a (misplaced) postscript, the treatise must have been written at a time when it was even less likely that Xenophon was in a position to describe so fully the Spartan system. (The date of 387 suggested by E. Delebecque, *Essai sur la vie de Xénophon*, 194–9, is, to my mind, wholly unsatisfactory.)

³⁹ e.g. by J.-F. Bommelaer, op. cit. 231. Contra, P. A. Cartledge, op. cit. 316.

⁴⁰ cf. Plut. *Lyc.* 30.

⁴¹ cf. Posidonius *ap.* Ath. 6. 233 f–234a (= FGH 87 F 48).

⁴² Hdt. 3. 148, 5. 51, 6. 72. 2; Thuc. 2. 21. 1, 5. 16. 3; Diod. 13. 106. 10; Ephorus (FGH 70) F 193.

⁴³ cf. Plut. *Lyc.* 21. 2, Tyrtaeus 11. 14. The sole survivor of the Battle of the Champions, who had been left in victorious possession of the field, committed suicide, rather than return to Sparta alone (Hdt. 1. 82. 8).

⁴⁴ The last clause of the first sentence of Xen. *Hell.* 5. 3. 9 is to be taken with all three categories.

⁴⁵ Agesilaus in 378 BC, with five 'divisions' of the Spartans, had a larger army under his command than the presumably full force army of Nemea (Diod. 15. 32. 1, Xen. *Hell.* 4. 2. 16, though it should be noted that Xenophon omitted to count in the Tegeans who took part in the battle).

⁴⁶ There is no formal conflict between Xen. *Hell.* 5. 2. 21 ff. (of 382 BC) and Diod. 15. 31. 2 (of 378 BC), but Xenophon may have misremembered the date of the institution.

⁴⁷ None of the bits of evidence about dress or hair distinguish between Spartiates and non-Spartiates; cf. Hdt. 1. 82. 8, [Xen.] [*Lac. Pol.*] 11. 3, Arist. frag. 499. Thucydides surprisingly was not exact about the number of Spartiates captured on Sphacteria (4. 38. 5) as he would have been if their dress and hair had been distinctive; he did not deal in round numbers for the total. There may have been some distinguishing marks, but not so obvious as hair and dress, to judge by [Xen.] *Lac. Pol.* 1. 6.

⁴⁸ cf. W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War* 11, Ch. 11.

⁴⁹ cf. Xen. *Hell.* 7. 5. 19.

⁵⁰ Note the use of trenches and palisades (Xen. *Hell.* 5.4. 38).

⁵¹ Diod. 15. 37. 1 is the merest notice, Plut. *Pelop.* 17 very imprecise.

⁵² cf. CQ n.s. 2.2. (1972.), 260–2.

Intellectual Chronology

BC

Herodotus constructs first extant account of Spartan customs.

Thucydides analyses Sparta as opponent of Athens.

Cicero composes two positive accounts of Sparta.

Xenophon praises the achievements of King Agesilaus and analyses the Spartan *politeia*.

Plato uses Sparta as an inspiration of his ideal state.

Aristotle analyses the failure of Sparta in *Politics*, and organises compilation of historical account of the Spartan constitution.

Sosibius, an antiquarian writer, consolidates knowledge about Spartan past.

Sphaerius of Borysthenes, Stoic philosopher, advises Cleomenes III about reforms to Spartan society and constitution.

AD

Plutarch composes biographies of leading Spartans.

Pausanias visits Sparta and describes the reconstructed 'archaic' rites.

Strabo of *Monemvasia* reports abandonment of Sparta.

Byzantine Despot of the Morea based at Mistra (6 km north-west of Sparta).

George Gemistius Plethon uses ancient Sparta as model for the reinvigoration of contemporary Byzantium.

Cardinal Bessarion advocates Lycurgan Sparta as ideal for resisting Ottoman Turks.

Machiavelli identifies Lycurgus as example of successful legislator.

Jane Harrington uses Sparta as basis for critical advice to Cromwell.

Wieland praises Spartan customs as conducive to creation of classical beauty.

Rousseau uses Sparta as epitome of virtuous republicanism.

Early 19th century patriotic Spartan pictures at Paris salon.

Otfried Müller publishes *Geschichte Hellenischer Stämme und Städte, II & III, die Dorier*, which advances racial explanation of ideal Spartan state.

Publication of first volume of George Grote's *History of Greece*, which champions democratic Athens and makes less of Spartan achievements.

Busolt's study of the Peloponnesian League, *Die Lakedaemonier und ihre Bundesgenossen*.

Ehrenberg's *Neugrunder des Staates* presents positive analysis of organised Spartan society.

F. K. Günther's *Rassengeschichte des Hellenischen und des Römischen*

Volkes presents Sparta as a truly Nordic nation.

1930 Ollier's *Le mirage spartiate* demonstrates benefits of studying Spartan myths.

1947 Helmut Berve's *Sparta* reconciles scholarly analysis with Nazi ideology.

1968 publication, in French, of Moses Finley's seminal essay.

1991 Geoffrey de Ste Croix's *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*.

Guide to Further Reading

Any serious student of Sparta is soon going to have to get to grips with the primary sources. Although material is scattered in different historical and philosophical works or collections, much of the most important evidence is contained in a limited number of texts for which reasonable translations are readily available in the Penguin and Oxford World Classics series; for those who possess even a limited knowledge of Greek, the parallel texts and translations of the Loeb series are the best approach.

Herodotus. *Histories*, trans. R. Waterfield, Oxford: Oxford University Press (Oxford World Classics), 1998; trans. A. de Sélincourt, rev. with intro. and notes J. M. Marincola, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996; trans. A. D. Godley, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (Loeb Classical Library), 1920–5.

Plutarch. The only readily available translation of all the *Lives* is in the Loeb series, trans. H. Perrin, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (Loeb Classical Library) 1914–21; *Lycurgus* is in volume I, *Lysander* in IV, *Agessilaus* in V, and *Agis and Cleomenes* in X. R. J. A. Talbert, *Plutarch on Sparta*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988, contains the *Lycurgus*, *Agis and Cleomenes*, *Sayings of Spartans*, and *Sayings of Spartan Women*, as well as Xenophon's *Constitution of the Spartans*. R. Waterfield, *Plutarch's Greek Lives: A Selection of Nine Lives*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (Oxford World Classics), 1998, contains the *Lycurgus* and *Agessilaus*.

Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. R. Warner, with introduction and notes by M. I. Finley, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972; trans. C. F. Smith, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (Loeb Classical Library), 1919–23. The classic seventeenth-century translation of Thomas Hobbes is also available: D. Grene, *The Peloponnesian War, Thucydides. The Complete Hobbes Translation, with Notes and a New Introduction*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1959 (now reissued by the University of Chicago Press).

Xenophon. The *Hellenica* is available under the title of *A History of My Times*, trans. R. Warner, intro. G. Cawkwell, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979; also trans. C. L. Brownson, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (Loeb Classical Library), 1918–21. The shorter works are collected in volume 5 of the Loeb, *Scripta Minora*, trans. E. C. Marchant, rev. G. W. Bowersock, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (Loeb Classical Library), 1968. The *Constitution of the Spartans* is also available in Talbert's *Plutarch on Sparta* collection, noted above, and in J. M. Moore, *Aristotle and Xenophon on Democracy and*

Oligarchy, London: Chatto & Windus, 1975 (reissued by University of California Press, Berkeley, 1986).

For those wishing a brief overview of Spartan history, George Forrest's *A History of Sparta 950–192 BC* is as good as anything: in only 140 pages of lucid exposition, Forrest narrates the events and introduces the major issues which affect our understanding of Spartan society and culture. It happens to be the first specialist work on Greek history which I purchased, and so I have something of a soft spot for it, but even if the academic industry of the past generation has moved some debates to new ground, Forrest still offers a useful stylistic benchmark which the rest of us should be pleased to reach.

For more detailed coverage of the Classical period as well as coverage of Mycenaean Sparta, then Paul Cartledge's *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History 1300–362 BC* is sensible and thorough. The last two chapters of *Sparta and Lakonia* deal with material that is treated at much greater length in Cartledge's *Agesilaos and the Crisis of Sparta*; this is a large book which requires greater stamina and a clear head, not least because the author's principled rejection of footnotes tends to create a dense text. It is certainly worth dipping into it for specific discussions. Another useful volume will be a collection of new or rewritten essays on Sparta by Paul Cartledge (*Spartan Reflections*): Cartledge has definite views on Sparta, which should be borne in mind when considering his arguments, but his important work cannot be fully represented in a volume such as this. To see the most important inspiration for these one should turn to Moses Finley's classic essay 'Sparta' (available in M. I. Finley, *The Use and Abuse of History*, 161–77, 238–40 = 'Sparta and Spartan Society', in his *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece*, 25–40, 253–5). I remain unconvinced by some of Finley's presuppositions, and his survey begs many questions, but this is still a stimulating analysis and remains historiographically important. The other major influence on Paul Cartledge's scholarship, Geoffrey de Ste Croix's *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, is represented in this collection by three extracts, but there is much more provocative discussion, incisive analysis and argument in the book.

A recurrent plea in discussions of Sparta is for there to be more archaeological evidence to supplement the meagre and disputed literary record. At present the best treatment, with a reasonable range of illustrations is L. F. Fitzhardinge's *The Spartans*; there is useful material in J. T. Hooker's *The Ancient Spartans*, which also has a clear account of Spartan religious practices. The interpretation of the material record, especially with regard to the alleged austerity of Classical Sparta, is a topic of current debate in the light of recent work by Stephen Hodkinson. His *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta* collects and develops the ideas which, as presented in article form over the past eighteen years, have done so much to advance our understanding of Spartan society. An important forthcoming item is the full publication of the Laconia Survey, of which the second volume has already appeared (W. Cavanagh et al., *Annual of the British School at Athens* suppl. vol. 27, 1996); undoubtedly this

will require some digesting, and should throw up as many questions as answers, but anything which improves our conception of how the inhabitants of Laconia (and Messenia) lived is to be welcomed. The easiest way to keep abreast of archaeological work of relevance to Sparta is to consult the annual surveys in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* Archaeological Reports; granted that much important work is undertaken by British scholars, it is also worth glancing at *Annual of the British School at Athens* for reports of new finds.

Finally, on the legacy of Sparta and the impact of this on European history, Elizabeth Rawson's survey, *The Spartan Tradition in European Thought*, gives an intriguing insight into the manifold Spartas which intellectuals have constructed over the past two and a half millennia.

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